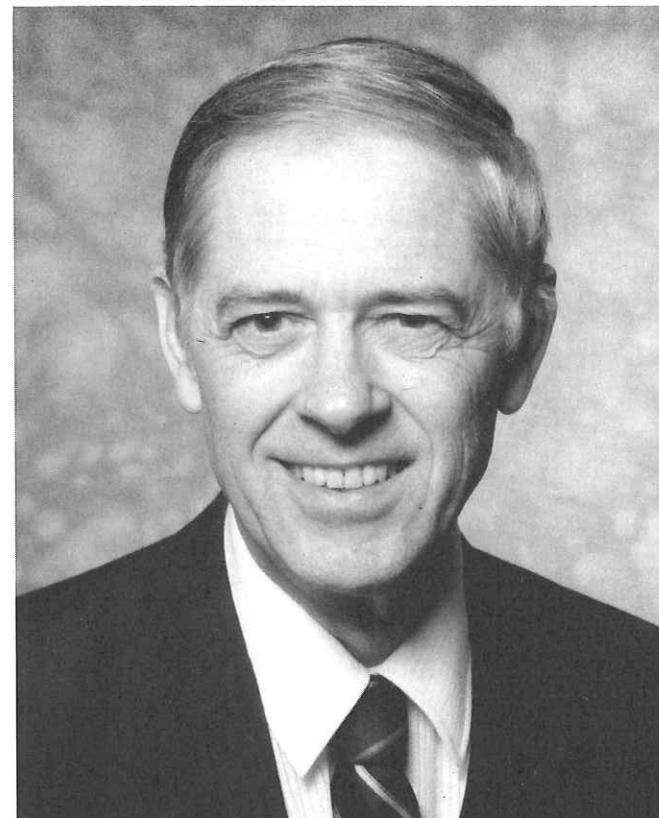


The Historical Trail

1994



The Rev. Dr. Thomas C. Oden
Professor of Theology and Ethics
The Theological School and The Graduate School, Drew University

Yearbook of
Conference Historical Society
and
Commission on Archives and History
Southern New Jersey Conference
The United Methodist Church

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Rev. Charles A. Green, *Editor*

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The Historical Trail. 1994.

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Conference Historical Society
and

Commission on Archives and History

Southern New Jersey Conference, The United Methodist Church

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Foreword

Mrs. Miriam L. G. Coffee

President, S.N.J. Conference Historical Society

The wise Solomon has said that there is a time for everything. The past, which we call history, must then have a place in the present. The specific moments of the past are gone; however, the results and the influences of past people and events are still important in the present. Do our Constitution and its authors have input upon us today? What, then, are the messages from our past Methodist churches and their people, especially those of the Southern New Jersey Conference? *The Historical Trail* brings messages from Methodist history into present-day consciousness. *The Historical Trail* also recounts activities of present-day Methodism.

If all activities of both past and present Methodism were listed, could we see, perhaps, that success has resulted from putting God's will first in all things, including the right time (God's time) for performing the activities? Timing is very important in most of life's activities: sports, cooking, business, relationships, salvation. Although God is not limited by time, he gave humanity time. We live in both the past and the present. As one moment passes into our past, another enters as the present. The articles of *The Historical Trail* recount the placing of God's will ahead of personal desire at the right time.

The Historical Trail is free to all members of the Southern New Jersey Conference Historical Society, and it may be purchased by non-members.

The annual meeting of the Conference Historical Society is Friday, October 28, 1994, at Old Orchards United Methodist Church (next to the Conference Office Building), 1995 East Marlton Pike (Route 70 East), Cherry Hill, New Jersey; the meeting will be hosted by both the Old Orchards and the Korean congregations. Non-members are also invited to attend and enjoy the dinner and program.



Introduction

This issue of *The Historical Trail* combines the varied interests of our readers: Wesleyan, American, and New Jersey. We focus on our Wesleyan heritage in the article by the Rev. Dr. Thomas C. Oden, a sermon by John Wesley, a hymn by Charles Wesley, an anecdote from the life of John Wesley, and an Aldersgate message by Mrs. Penny Moore. Our American Methodist heritage is highlighted also in the Rev. Dr. Oden's article, in the presentation by the Rev. Robert B. Steelman, and indirectly in the anecdote about John Wesley and James Oglethorpe. Our New Jersey Methodist heritage is mentioned by the Rev. Dr. Oden, and it is emphasized in four articles dealing with local churches and circuits.

Divided We Stand

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the formation of The United Methodist Church was observed and celebrated throughout 1993. Last year *The Historical Trail* contained four articles dealing with that union. Another part of the observance has been an awareness that United Methodism is not the entire Wesleyan and Methodist family, and we remain very much divided in spite of the celebrated union of 1968. Last year and this year have been appropriate times to remember our divisions. The year 1993 was the 150th anniversary of the formation of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America (later called the Wesleyan Methodist Church and now the Wesleyan Church); 1993 was also the 100th anniversary of the death of Bishop Benjamin Titus Roberts (1824–1893), founder of the Free Methodist Church (1859) after his expulsion from the Genesee Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (1858). The present year, 1994, is the 200th anniversary of Bishop Francis Asbury's preaching "at the new African church" (Asbury, *Journal*, Sunday, June 29, 1794); this occasion was the dedication service for the Bethel Church, Philadelphia, where the African Methodist Episcopal Church was later organized (1816). The year 1994 is also the 150th anniversary of the 1844 General Conference (Methodist Episcopal Church), which adopted the Plan of Separation that led to the formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; and it is the 200th anniversary of the birth of Bishop James Osgood Andrew (1794–1871), whose ownership of slaves became the focus of the controversy that erupted in the General Conference of 1844. Other divisions within the Wesleyan and Methodist family have been numerous over the years.

An examination of division, combined with a celebration of union, was observed on Saturday, October 9, 1993, at Evangelical United Methodist

Illustrations

Pictured on the front cover is The Rev. Dr. Thomas C. Oden. This picture is published by courtesy of Drew University, Madison, New Jersey.

Illustrations that are not identified on the page where they occur have come from the following sources:

[Brigden, T. E.] *John Wesley the Methodist: A Plain Account of His Life and Work*. By a Methodist Preacher. With One Hundred Portraits, Views, and Facsimiles. New York: Eaton & Mains; Cincinnati: Jennings & Pye; 1903. Illustrations on pp. 44, 48, 91.

Buckley, James Monroe (1836–1920). *A History of Methodism in the United States*. Vol. I. New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1897. Illustration on p. 69.

Daniels, William Haven (1836–1908). *The Illustrated History of Methodism in Great Britain and America, from the Days of the Wesleys to the Present Time*. New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1879. Illustrations on pp. 22, 35, 36, 39, 82, 83.

Hyde, Ammi Bradford (1826–1921). *The Story of Methodism: Tracing the Rise and Progress of That Wonderful Religious Movement, Which, Like the Gulf Stream, Has Given Warmth to Wide Waters and Verdure to Many Lands; and Giving An Account of Its Various Influences and Institutions of To-day*. Greenfield, Mass.: Willey & Co., Publishers, 1887. Illustration on p. 88.

Steelman, Robert B. *What God Has Wrought: A History of the Southern New Jersey Conference of The United Methodist Church*. Pennington, New Jersey: Published by The United Methodist Church, Southern New Jersey Annual Conference, Commission on Archives and History, 1986. Illustration on p. 10.

The Historical Trail

Church in Clarksboro, New Jersey. This church is the oldest former EUB Church in the Southern New Jersey Conference. The host pastor was the Rev. Gary L. Turk. Under the combined sponsorship of the Conference Historical Society and the Commission on Archives and History, this event brought together a number of thoughtful presenters and participants. The review of Methodist Protestantism, Southern Methodism, and Free Methodism, presented by the Rev. Robert B. Steelman, our Conference Historian, is included in this issue of *The Historical Trail*.

On that same day the Rev. Dr. Thomas C. Oden spoke on the theme, "The Catholic Spirit." The text of the Rev. Dr. Oden's talk is part of this issue of *The Historical Trail*. Taking his text from John Wesley's sermon and proceeding from there, the Rev. Dr. Oden spoke of the remaining divisions in United Methodism, the numerous possibilities for cooperation and fellowship, and what he called "the distinctive modern United Methodist ecumenical sin." Building on the Wesleyan heritage, and going beyond traditional ecumenical encounters, the Rev. Dr. Oden shows how history and heritage are vitally important and relevant in current theological and ecumenical discussion. His challenge to the church deserves reflection and action. The Rev. Dr. Oden is a theologian, author, and lecturer. He is currently Professor of Theology and Ethics at The Theological School and The Graduate School, Drew University, Madison, New Jersey. He also serves as Senior Editor of *Christianity Today* magazine. He has written widely and extensively, and continues to do so; among his published books are *Doctrinal Standards in the Wesleyan Tradition; Systematic Theology* (3 vols.); and many others.

John Wesley's sermon, "Catholic Spirit," is included in this issue of *The Historical Trail*. This sermon is quoted and referred to frequently, and the Rev. Dr. Oden made several references to it. It is placed here for the convenience of the reader who may wish to refer to it in conjunction with reading the Rev. Dr. Oden's article, and for the benefit of the reader who may not have ready access to the sermons of John Wesley. A hymn by Charles Wesley, "Catholic Love," which was published with his brother's sermon, is here also.

Our Protestant Heritage

Are Methodists really catholic? The sense in which we are catholic, and the sense in which we are not, is defined in the three pieces by the Rev. Dr. Oden, John Wesley, and Charles Wesley. The first sense in which we are catholic is that we are part of the universal Christian church; the second sense is that we are part of the tradition that traces itself to the ancient undivided church; the third sense in which we are catholic is that we hold to the doctrines of universal Christianity; and the fourth sense is that we are in

Introduction

fellowship with all others who hold to these truths. We are *not* catholic in any allegiance to the Church of Rome or any other church that includes "Catholic" as part of its name, though we share much in common with all Christian churches. The word as it is used by the Rev. Dr. Oden and by John and Charles Wesley refers to ecumenical and cooperative fellowship with other Christians who believe in "the truth as it is in Jesus."

The divisions within the larger Wesleyan and Methodist family continue to separate us, though our common heritage may unite us, at least in occasional endeavors and continuing fellowship. Some of these divisions are examined in the article by our Conference Historian, the Rev. Robert B. Steelman. Two historic divisions which were healed in the 1939 formation of The Methodist Church are the Methodist Protestant Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Another division, which resulted in the formation of the Free Methodist Church, continues to this day.

In the spirit of catholic love, John Wesley asks his hearers (and us, his readers) to examine their hearts and see whether they love God and whether they love each other. It is the awareness of the love of God for us—for each and for all—that hit home when John Wesley had his heart-warming experience at Aldersgate in 1738. A devotional message on that Aldersgate experience is included in this issue of *The Historical Trail*. The message was given by Mrs. Penny Moore in 1989, when she was President of the Southern New Jersey Conference Historical Society. The service was held at the Batsto-Pleasant Mills Meeting House, Pleasant Mills, New Jersey, on Aldersgate Day, Wednesday, May 24, 1989. At the Annual Conference session held at Ocean City the next month, the Batsto-Pleasant Mills Meeting House was designated a United Methodist Historic Site (No. 223). The Aldersgate Service held in 1989 was the first of a continuing series of annual services held on Aldersgate Day, May 24, under the combined sponsorship of the Conference Historical Society and the Commission on Archives and History. These services are held in different churches from year to year, and they are open to all. They keep alive the tradition of the Wesleyan heritage and the warm heart.

An Almost-Buried Treasure

The Rev. Alex Borsos, Jr., a member of the Commission on Archives and History and former pastor of New Egypt United Methodist Church (1975–1982), has prepared an interesting article that brings to light information that had been previously unknown—information that very nearly was lost forever. See the section of his article entitled "A Rare Find in a Dump." How much of our heritage has been lost in the way that this information almost was? In *What God Has Wrought*, the history of the Southern New Jer-

sey Conference, the Rev. Robert B. Steelman says: "The oldest circuit record in New Jersey and one of the oldest to be found anywhere is the Steward's Book for Salem Circuit, May 17, 1789 to March 26, 1814" (p. 31). The Rev. Mr. Borsos reports on the discovery of the Steward's Book for the New Mills Circuit (Pemberton), covering the years 1783–1815. This rare find therefore is older than the oldest circuit record previously known in New Jersey, and it covers a wider range of years, beginning six years earlier and extending one year later than the Salem Circuit record. The Rev. Mr. Borsos has also arranged for a transcription of the Steward's Book for the New Mills Circuit to be deposited in the Archives Room located on the campus of The Pennington School.

The Local Church

Two local church histories are included in this issue of *The Historical Trail*. The Rev. Howard L. Cassaday, Southwest District Representative for the Conference Historical Society and former pastor of Richwood United Methodist Church (1984–1989), compiled the history of the Richwood church in 1992. He has abridged that work for inclusion in *The Historical Trail*.

Morganville United Methodist Church is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year, and Mr. Walter H. Jones, Church Historian, has written the history of the church. A shortened version of that history is presented in this issue. Mr. Jones is now Northeast District Representative for the Conference Historical Society, and he has served in the past as a member and as secretary of the Commission on Archives and History. His wife, the Rev. Mary Frances Pearson Jones, has been pastor of the Morganville church since 1990.

Bits of History

Three anecdotes round out the current issue of *The Historical Trail*. One dates from the voyage of John Wesley to America in 1735–1736. The other two stories come from the generations after Wesley in the Kingswood School, the school founded for the education of Methodist children and later used for the sons of the preachers. Brief character sketches of two leaders of the Wesleyan separation in America are also included.

Camp Meetings

This year two of our camp meetings are celebrating their 125th anniversaries: the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting, and Malaga Camp Meeting. In addition to these, the South Seaville, Delanco, and Pitman Camp Meetings continue to serve the people of Southern New Jersey, and the Wesleyan

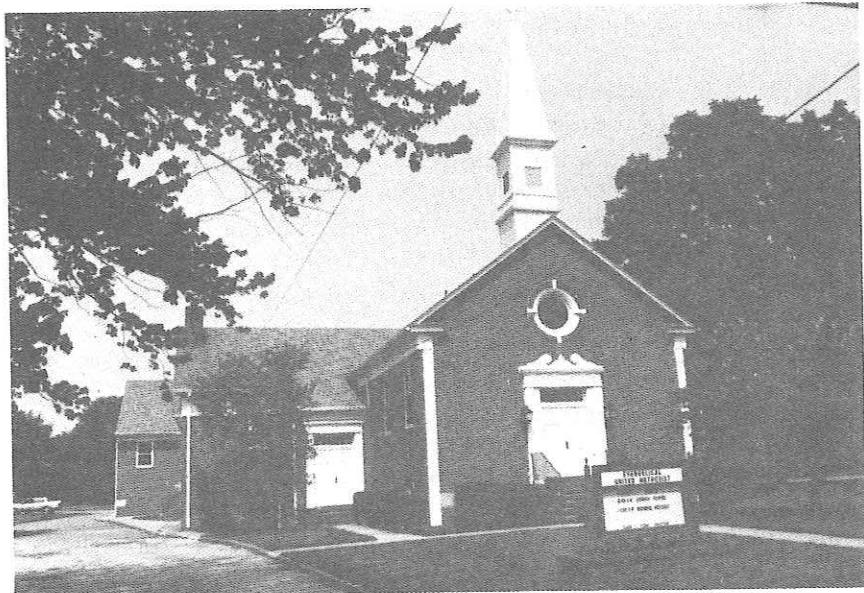
Church has a Camp Meeting at Aura. The Conference Historical Society will be emphasizing the camp meeting heritage at its annual meeting in October 1994. Look for echoes of that commemoration in next year's issue.

Gratitude

The contributors to this issue have our warmest thanks for their researches and their interest in the preservation and propagation of the historic Methodist way of life. Members of the Conference Historical Society and the Commission on Archives and History have been most helpful in the projects that have led to the production of this booklet. And to the members and friends of the Conference Historical Society, and all who love the Wesleyan heritage and the Methodist tradition, we express our thanks and our best wishes.

Charles A. Green
Editor





**Evangelical United Methodist Church
Clarksboro, New Jersey**

Organized March 24, 1880, as Zion Church of the Evangelical Association
Oldest former EUB Church in the Southern New Jersey Conference

The Catholic Spirit

*Presentation at a Seminar Entitled
"Divided We Stand"*

*Commemorating the 25th Anniversary of the Formation of
The United Methodist Church*

*Evangelical United Methodist Church
Clarksboro, New Jersey
Saturday, October 9, 1993*

Rev. Dr. Thomas C. Oden

*Theologian, Author, and Lecturer
Professor of Theology and Ethics, The Theological School and The Graduate School,
Drew University*

*Author of Doctrinal Standards in the Wesleyan Tradition; Systematic
Theology (3 vols.); and many others
Senior Editor, Christianity Today*

"And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him: and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give me thine hand. And he gave him his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot."

II Kings 10:15

Our heavenly Father, who by thy love hast made us, and through thy love hast kept us, and in thy love wouldst make us perfect: We humbly confess that we have not loved thee with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, and that we have not loved one another as Christ hath loved us. Thy life is within our souls, but our selfishness hath hindered thee. We have not lived by faith. We have resisted thy Spirit. We have neglected thine inspirations.

Forgive what we have been; help us to amend what we are; and in thy Spirit direct what we shall be, that thou mayest come into the full glory of thy creation, in us and in all men; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.¹

It is appropriate that we have this celebration in this former EUB setting, and I am reminded of the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting tradition of the mid-nineteenth century and late nineteenth century, where a lot of historic action occurred in South Jersey. I wish you well in your historical reflections; you have something important to offer the church.

My theme is "The Catholic Spirit." Can Christians be of one heart, even though they may be of different opinions? That is the question that became the text for one of the great homilies of John Wesley on the "Catholic

¹*The Book of Worship for Church and Home: With orders of worship, services for the administration of Sacraments, and aids to worship according to the usages of The Methodist Church.* Nashville, Tennessee: The Methodist Publishing House, 1964, 1965. p. 172.

Spirit.”² The text is, “Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? . . . If it be, give me thine hand” (II Kings 10:15), and it regarded the meeting between the ruthless Jehu and the religious fanatic Jehonadab, when Jehu asked, “Are you in accord with me, as I with you?” And when Jehonadab answered, “I am,” Jehu replied, “If so, give me your hand,” or as the King James Version says, “[If] thine heart [is] . . . as my heart . . . , give me thine hand.” Wesley was not concerned here with the mixed motives of Jehu but with the form of reconciliation of human estrangement that comes not simply from intellectual agreement, but from a right heart, from good will, from the center to the circumference. The major thesis of Wesley’s sermon on the “Catholic Spirit” is that we may be of one heart, even though we are not of one opinion. Human barriers are being overcome by God the Spirit. The love of God is penetrating our divisions, bringing us together, beyond all kinds of cultural differences and human antipathies. However dissimilar we may be in our cultural, moral, or religious opinions, persons of good will may become united by grace in trusting affection. Partisan disputation usually fails to grasp how hearts can be knit together despite conceptual differences and cultural-political economic differences. Persons holding divergent opinions, and shaped by different modes of thinking and worship, still may be joined in love, warmth, and mutual affection.

Wesley’s teaching on this text says a great deal about the affectionate tolerationist ethos of the United Methodist tradition. He had a very technical or special definition of opinion. By opinion, he meant ideas nonessential for Christian teaching. He meant optional matters. It’s what theologians call *adiaphora*, the optional things that are neither commanded nor forbidden in Scripture—matters of free interpretation, matters of conscience without stretching the limits of genuine orthodox Christianity.

From his mother, Wesley had inherited a puritan resistance to an inflexible use of religious language; from his father, he had inherited a stubborn Anglican loyalty to the ancient classic Christian consensual tradition of faith. However deeply committed to classic Christian essentials, he resisted the notion that they could be captured in a single, unalterable linguistic form. As a lifelong editor, John Wesley was tempted to revise almost every sentence he read, even those that he himself had earlier written. It is a habit which suggests that he did not view any particular expression of faith, excepting the sacred text itself, as the norm of Christian teaching. Wesley, in the “Catholic Spirit,” was appealing to the freedom of the Christian person to hold opinions, even peculiar opinions, which do not dislodge the heart of

²John Wesley’s sermon, “Catholic Spirit,” appears on pp. 23–33 of this issue of *The Historical Trail*. Charles Wesley’s hymn, “Catholic Love,” which was published with John’s sermon, is on pp. 34–35.

Christian teaching. It is possible affectionately to embrace another who has a different persuasion, or different ways of looking at liturgy or doctrine. Amid the multiplicity of inclinations and sentiments, there remains a lot of room for the address of conscience, and each one of us must finally stand before God on the last day.

The catholic spirit should not be confused with what was called latitudinarianism in the eighteenth century. Latitudinarianism really implies “anything goes.” Nor should the catholic spirit be confused with partisan bigotry. Wesley has two polarities here—latitudinarianism on the one hand, and bigotry on the other. He is working his way in between those options. Wesley was concerned about valid argument, defensible interpretation of Scripture, and the interpretation of the classical Christian message, which he called the Old Catholic Faith; but he was less intent upon any particular doctrinal definition of minutiae—the little things that do not really get to the heart of that faith. This does not imply that anything goes, or that doctrine is diminished in importance; for Wesley strongly resisted this indifferent attitude, which he called speculative latitudinarianism. Speculative latitudinarianism, Wesley says, is “an indifference to all opinions.” This is not what he means by the catholic spirit. The indifference in latitudinarianism is “the spawn of hell, not the offspring of heaven . . . , being ‘driven to and fro, and tossed about with every wind of doctrine.’” That’s not the catholic spirit. This latitudinarianism, he says, “is a great curse, not a blessing; an irreconcilable enemy, not a friend, to true catholicism,” that is, to the truly catholic spirit. “A man of a truly catholic spirit has not now his religion to seek”: we’re not seeking the religion. “He is fixed as the sun in his judgement concerning the main branches of Christian doctrine”—that’s already behind one who is extending his hand in Christian fellowship. Though, he adds, this person must be “always ready to hear and weigh whatsoever can be offered against his principles.” Wesley was always urging us to be open to being challenged in whatever assumptions we have made about the Christian faith. Some think they have a catholic spirit who have only “a muddy understanding; because your mind is all in a mist; because you have no settled, consistent principles, but are for jumbling all opinions together. . . . Go, first, and learn the first elements of the gospel of Christ, and then you shall learn to be of a truly catholic spirit.”

There is a brilliant device in this sermon on the catholic spirit by which Wesley tests the sincerity of the catholic heart. It is a series of questions in which he is asking whether one is really ready to be personally accountable to Christian teaching. If you want to take a look at it sometime in that great sermon, it is ¶¶ 12–18 of the first section. Pivotal to the structure of this homily are fifty-three questions—there’s a whole panoply of questions there,—which are being put soberly to the hearer and not simply to the *head*

of the hearer, but to the *heart*. These are confessional questions addressed to the heart. How do you assess whether your heart is as my heart? This is not simply a confessional approach to truth-telling. It is rather a highly personal self-examination of the upright heart; it is a matter of intensely responsible self-inquiry. It is a very different approach, I think, in the Anglican-Wesleyan tradition from what it would be in the reformed-confessionalist tradition, which would simply say, "Well, here are the words." Rather, Wesley is saying, how is the Holy Spirit attesting within your heart as to the truthfulness of the Christian faith? And then he goes through these fifty-three questions, and they are actually organized around a triune structure of Christian teaching: first the Father, then the Son, and then the Holy Spirit. He is probing the depth of one's faith in God Almighty, the Eternal One who is present and the Giver of all things; he is probing the Christian's faith in the Son, who comes to us in the incarnate Word, who is born, who becomes a fetus, who becomes a child, who comes under the guidance of his parents and his religious institutions, who humbles himself and becomes obedient, even unto death. In other words, these are questions addressed to the hearer as to how deeply the word of the Son is being understood; how deeply the atoning love of God on the cross is being grasped; how deeply the Resurrection is understood. These are just questions; Wesley is just asking his hearer questions. I think this is a profoundly penetrating form of Christian self-examination. Having one's heart right before God is not simply an emotive matter that can brush aside scriptural doctrine, but it requires pressing those questions with inward honesty and intensity. So Wesley was arguing for doctrinal clarity, manifested in catholic love, but expressed through cultural pluralism—not *doctrinal* pluralism but *cultural* pluralism. It was a pluralism that reached out for all levels of society, that reached out for the American Indian in the Georgia situation, that reached for the Irish in the Irish situation, both Catholic and Protestant. It is only in answer to this cascade of fifty-three doctrinal and personal questions that one comes to discover whether one's heart is right with God and rightly prepared for the openness of faith active in love. Each question is being asked in God's presence and attested by the inward voice of conscience; that is, only I know what the answer of my own conscience is to the question of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit—the Spirit who awakens faith, the Spirit who brings the mission of the Son into fulfillment. So, if your heart is as my heart, give me your hand.

Up to this point, I have simply summarized the argument of that one great sermon, and I urge you to read the text. Do not be satisfied in your historical study with secondary sources; go to the primary sources. You will find them always challenging and illuminating.

Tonight, we are commemorating the 25th anniversary of the formation of The United Methodist Church out of these two great traditions—the former EUB tradition and the former Methodist tradition (with its own varying streams of tradition). I was present in Dallas in 1968, when that happy, hopeful, and, I think, very optimistic marriage occurred. I saw the marriage happen at the Dallas General Conference, 1968. And I remember the idealism that prevailed. It almost reeked with optimism, almost messianism. Keep in mind that we are talking about 1968. The whole cultural ethos of that period was for many people a time of breaking down barriers and opening up new arenas, and it was a very optimistic period in certain ways. Now, I don't mean to neglect the great crisis our culture was in at that time, but we had a very positive conception of ourselves as being able to break through the problems that we were experiencing. In terms of the ecumenical movement, this was a period of what I would call liberal ecumenism. I believe that that period of ecumenism is now on the defensive, somewhat dated; but at that time these two great denominations combined made a membership of almost eleven million. Today we are in a different situation. Now, in many ways we have spent many of the muscular institutions that we were bequeathed. Now we are down to about eight and one-half million.

What was right about that union? A lot was right about it, because it expressed our great desire to show our unity in Christ and to embody that unity as fully as we can.

What went wrong? I think the simplest way to talk about what went wrong is by saying that we have accommodated to a culture that itself was in a devolving or deteriorating process. So, if you as a church body wed yourself to a particular cultural situation, then when that cultural situation becomes vulnerable, you, as an institution, become vulnerable.

One of the questions raised today is, How united is Methodism? Is it more united or more divided than it was in 1968? I can only speak intuitively about this kind of question, but in my view, it's more divided now than it was in 1968. I'm just saying that the spirit is far more fragmented, far more pluralistic than it was. Is it less centered? Yes, I believe it is, despite that fact that we have been through a doctrinal centering process that never did take hold. In a certain sense we have greater doctrinal cohesion formally and textually in our actual *Book of Discipline*, but in terms of practical centering, I don't think that we are as clear about who we are doctrinally as we were twenty-five years ago. Are we less apostolic? Yes, I believe so, in the sense that I think we are less engaged in the kind of concrete missional involvement that literally embraces the whole world with the power of the proclaimed Word, the Gospel proclaimed. Now, there are a lot of other things about our mission that have been very good, but in many ways I think we have seen a deterioration of that mission.

Are we less or more catholic? I think you could argue that we are more catholic. That is, we are more pluralistic, and I think there are positive achievements of this period of twenty-five years. But on the whole, if by "catholic" we mean that unifying spirit to which Wesley pointed when he was talking about embracing one another on the basis of our deeply considered faith in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, I cannot honestly say that we are more catholic.

Are we more holy? That would be hard to argue. With regard to the marks of the church—oneness, holiness, catholicity, apostolicity—I am not sure that I can give any good arguments to the effect that we have made enormous gains in these twenty-five years.

What can we learn from our continuing divisions? I think we can learn patience in dialogue; we can learn to re-center. It is always possible for the Holy Spirit to reawaken the church; never count the Holy Spirit out.

Another issue that has been raised today is: Do the issues that resulted in the black church separations—AME, AME Zion, and CME—still divide us? There is a certain sense in which we are less divided in structure. We are not divided in the same way that we were in the old segregationist days, and we have much to feel right about in terms of the ending of structural discrimination. On the other hand, we are perhaps more divided in terms of what I would call the spirit of civil discourse. I don't think we know how to engage in civil discourse better today than we did twenty-five years ago. I do not want to be cynical here; I am just trying to be honest about how I see the last twenty-five years.

What happened to church life when the EUB Church and The Methodist Church united? I think that the wedding was full of hope, and it actually has worked as a marriage; but as with all marriages, the parties have to work to make it work. It has not always been easy. I believe that congregations that were in the former EUB tradition and are now in the United Methodist tradition each have their own story. There is no way to profile it in a simple way, but my impression is that the transition has been made. There are still many from both traditions who recall the identity that they had in their previous tradition, and that is as it should be.

Now let us focus on some of the disillusionments of ecumenical idealism. I want to review the status of ecumenical dialogue as I see it, and especially dialogue with the evangelical wings of the various denominations that have been involved in what we call ecumenical dialogue in the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. Our overall theme here is "Divided We Stand." I think that the theme that has been set before us wishes for us to be honest about our theological divisions, our sociological divisions, our political divisions. We are deeply divided as a church politically; we are ideologically divided in much the same way that the whole cul-

ture is involved in what James Davidson Hunter calls *Culture Wars*. This has split each one of the denominations very fundamentally top to bottom, and you find conservatives and liberals in the Presbyterian tradition, in the Methodist tradition, in the Congregational tradition, and so forth.

Tonight let me function less as a historian and more as a cultural critic and a theological critic. Let me begin this last portion of my presentation with a frank discussion of what I call the distinctive modern United Methodist ecumenical sin, which is disdain for Evangelicals. The United Methodist Church has, in the last twenty-five years, spent enormous amounts of energy and money and effort on ecumenical affairs. Most of that energy has been directed toward conversations with look-alike liberal facsimiles in the so-called main-line or established church traditions. These are the church traditions that any sociologist can tell you are generally regarded as scaled upwardly mobile, that is, in terms of class status when you apply the usual criteria of education, prestige, and economic power. This is an uncomplimentary point, in some ways, about our ecumenical engagement. Downward mobility—that is, going down on the economic scale, which would express the kind of servant consciousness that we might well expect for a church which has faith in the servant Messiah—this downward mobility has never been a powerful motivating factor for liberal denominations that talk most conspicuously about ministry to the needy and liberation of the poor. In other words, while we talk a good game of liberation for the poor, we are ecumenically scaled upward. Meanwhile, the Charismatic and Pentecostal and Evangelical denominations, which are probably more likely to be identified with the poor, are the folks that are left off the "decent person's ecumenical invitation list." They are not invited; they are not there; we don't want them there; we don't invite them. Those invited are the leaders of the main-line Anglican, Reformed, Lutheran, United Methodist, and Congregationalist traditions. All others need not apply, especially if they take the Bible to be God's revealed Word. Meanwhile, there has been precious little attempt made to reach out for our nearest neighbors in the ecumenical village. For Presbyterians, for example, there has been very little attempt for the Presbyterian Church (USA) to reach out to Orthodox Presbyterians and other classical reformed and Dutch Calvinist groups. They have been deemed not current enough or witty enough or liberal enough to be ready for a dialogue of this sort. Disciples have refused to communicate with independent Churches of Christ, and the story is repeated in almost every denomination that congratulates itself on being tolerantly ecumenical. There has been a steady refusal to let these conversations happen, or even open the door to their possibility. I believe this point is best illustrated by the United Methodists, who have indeed refused to speak with any empathy at all to our nearest neighbors in the ecumenical village. I am talking about our own

Wesleyan-rooted family of churches that on the whole share our ecclesiology, our sacramental views, and our hopes for personal and societal sanctification. United Methodist ecumenical leaders know next to nothing about the Christian Holiness Association, the Wesleyan Theological Society, the pan-Wesleyan ethos of Wilmore, Kentucky, the Schmul Publishing Company, the Wesley Biblical Seminary, the Herald of Holiness, the Overseas Mission Society, and you can just go on and name dozens of long-term institutional manifestations of the Wesleyan tradition that we know absolutely nothing about. Why? Because we are busy being ecumenical. I believe this is not merely ignorance; it is planned illiteracy. It is determined unfamiliarity. It is intentional nescience—lack of knowledge. In the covenanting process that is being proposed by COCU, there is a call for signboards to be changed in front of Uniting Churches, and we are supposed to have signboards out in front of our churches that say, “The Churches of Christ Uniting” (in the gerundive—“uniting”). Beneath this signboard, I suggest a modest qualifier: “except for ‘fundies,’ ‘Bible thumpers,’ and Evangelicals.” Those who are committed to classical forms of ecumenism should insist that something like this kind of dialogue emerge—the dialogue with other evangelicals of our own church tradition,—before we trumpet our ecumenical achievements too broadly. The danger of the so-called “covenanting process” is that it will further blackball Evangelical church bodies from legitimated ecumenical identity.

Now, as a matter of fact, the Holy Spirit is enabling a new form of ecumenical Evangelical dialogue. That is actually happening. It is happening among Evangelicals of the main-line churches, and I consider myself one of those, and other Evangelicals of other main line traditions. It is happening also between Holiness and Pentecostal and Mennonite and Reformed inheritors of the revivalist tradition, and it is happening between those folks and the Eastern Orthodox tradition and the Roman moral tradition, and it is beginning to happen—although this is very late coming and very slow and tardy in my view—it is beginning to happen between United Methodists and the neighboring Wesleyan church bodies. But there is little in Geneva or at 475 Riverside Drive that is aware of what is happening here, and there is very little interest in this most recent work of the Holy Spirit.

The personalized evangelical ecumenism that has meant the most to my own ecumenical formation is small-scale, unpretentious, biblically grounded, deliberately committed to the sacred text at every point of interaction. Now, that is a kind of dialogue that refuses to be managed from the “God-box”—that’s the 475 Riverside Drive, Manhattan, Interchurch Center. It cannot be managed there. The Spirit is enabling a healing dialogue, shaped not by bureaucrats, but it is emerging in highly local, concrete, and personal situations of encounter and dialogue. And I believe that it is centering especially in the

recovery by Evangelicals of the catholic tradition, that is, the ancient ecumenical tradition, the great writers of the first five centuries and the first millennium of Christian memory. The emergent Evangelical ecumenical dialogue will be happening more through para-church missional associations than through formal old-line denominational bureaucracies. It is already happening through such unanticipated vehicles as evangelical publishing houses; social service agencies, such as World Vision; the academic arms of evangelicalism, such as the Evangelical Theological Society and the Wesleyan Theological Society. It is happening in cross-denominational evangelical seminaries and para-church ministries that bring together Christians of varied historical memories. Evangelicals are being called to dialogue with ecumenical Christians who, repenting, believe in Jesus Christ, only Son of God, and who, by the power of the Holy Spirit, are seeking to walk in the way of holiness. This is the arena in which this dialogue is occurring. A new opportunity is emerging, in my view, to seek a closer affinity among earnest, grounded, reflective, grass-roots Christians and Christians in this liberal ecumenical tradition who indeed share unfeigned faith in Jesus Christ and manifest the fruits of the Spirit. Whether or not there can be any significant *institutional* manifestations of dialogue is very much yet to be seen. It really depends upon what all of the responsible parties do. I believe that there is a great opportunity that is awaiting the church in developing this dialogue. To the extent that ecumenical evangelical dialogue is preempted by bureaucratic interests, that is, if we are just trying to satisfy a few people in the elite leadership and make them feel that their ecumenical conscience is being salved, then I don’t think there is a great deal of hope for that sort of dialogue.

Let me be more specific about what I mean by this pan-Wesleyan tradition. There are various traditions that have been united in The United Methodist Church: the Methodist Episcopal Church; the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; the Methodist Protestant Church; The Methodist Church; the Evangelical Association; the Church of the United Brethren in Christ; the Evangelical Church; and the Evangelical United Brethren Church. But all of those traditions are only a very small percentage of the larger pan-Wesleyan body, which is probably at least forty million people the world over. What do we mean by this pan-Wesleyan or Wesleyan tradition of churches—this Wesleyan family? I think the best way to answer the question is by referring to *The Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*. In other words, it is not just my opinion, but I want to give you the arrangement that is offered by an institutional sociologist about how various church bodies are linked together. Here is *The Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* list of Methodist bodies: African Methodist Episcopal Church; African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church; Bible Protestant

Church; Christian Methodist Episcopal Church; Evangelical Methodist Church; Free Methodist Church of North America; Fundamental Methodist Church; Primitive Methodist Church USA; Reformed Methodist Union Episcopal Church; Reformed Zion Union Apostolic Church; Southern Methodist Church; United Methodist Church—that's all of us—and the Wesleyan Church. But that's only a part of the picture. I have just listed the Methodist bodies. We still have a long way to go: We have the Salvation Army. We have all of the Churches of God, which come out of our tradition, and there are several major bodies here: Church of God in Anderson, Indiana; Church of God, Huntsville; Church of God the General Conference, Oregon, Illinois. There is the Church of the Nazarene, which is four hundred fifty thousand persons.

Then we have a whole group of denominations that are affiliated organizations of the Christian Holiness Association. That may not sound Methodist, but every one of these denominations that come out of the Christian Holiness Association has very deep links with those "come-outers," those people in the Evangelical Holiness Revivals of the mid-nineteenth century and late nineteenth century, 80% or 90% of whom emerged out of the Wesleyan movements. Here is the list of those affiliated with the Christian Holiness Association; it is a long list, but part of what I want to point out is how long the list is: the Bible Holiness Movement; the Brethren in Christ Church; Churches of Christ in Christian Union; Evangelical Christian Church; Evangelical Church of North America; Evangelical Friends Alliance; Evangelical Methodist Church; Free Methodist Church of North America; the Canadian Holiness Federation; the United Brethren in Christ, Sandusky Conference; the Church of the Nazarene; the Salvation Army; the Wesleyan Church; and a number of cooperating organizations—Church of God, Anderson, Indiana; Congregational Methodist Church; Methodist Protestant Church; and the Missionary Church.

And I have not even mentioned the Pentecostals yet. Among the Pentecostals we have a series of movements also clearly related to the tradition of Wesleyan-rooted holiness revivalism. These denominations include the Apostolic Faith; the Church of God; the Church of God of Prophecy; the Congregational Holiness Church; the International Pentecostal Holiness Church; Pentecostal Fire Baptized Holiness Church. What I want you to be aware of is that these Wesleyan-influenced international churches are among the fastest-growing churches in the world. Keep in mind that while our church is in the shrinking process, that other part of the family is growing. But we don't even know it. We don't have any relationships with them. We don't have any communication with them. We don't care about them. And that is our major United Methodist ecumenical sin.

They have world missions the world over—on every continent. The Salvation Army, for example, has a worldwide membership of an estimated two million. The combined membership of the AME, AME Zion, and CME Churches is currently listed at over five million, with about fifteen thousand congregations. The Church of the Nazarene has grown from about 165,000 in 1940 to about 450,000 today, and if you consider their worldwide membership it is more like 700,000. The Church of God of Cleveland, Tennessee, grew from 63,000 members in 1940 to 450,000 in 1981. And we have virtually systematically blocked ourselves from any kind of significant ecumenical dialogue with these our neighbors.

I realize that this sounds like an indictment of my own tradition, and in some ways it is. But it is never too late for repentance. As a matter of fact, in May 1993, I was asked to speak to the Ecumenical Affairs Commission of The United Methodist Church at Stony Brook. They didn't know what I was going to say. I said much of what I have presented here. And as a result of that discussion, one of the goals of the United Methodist Ecumenical Affairs Commission is presumably going to be dialogue, in this quadrennium, with our pan-Wesleyan family of churches. I hope it comes off; we have a lot to learn. You folks here in South Jersey are capable of helping that process by virtue of your location, your historical interests, and the spirit that I see at work here.

God bless you. It has been a delight to be here.





John Wesley

John Wesley
(1703–1791)

Catholic Spirit Sermon XXXIV

John Wesley
(1703–1791)

*Sermon preached at Newcastle on Monday, September 8, 1749,
and at Bristol on Monday, November 3, 1749.
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"And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him: and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give me thine hand. And he gave him his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot."

1. It is allowed even by those who do not pay this great debt, that love is due to all mankind; the royal law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," carrying its own evidence to all that hear it: and that, not according to the miserable construction put upon it by the zealots of old times, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour," thy relation, acquaintance, friend, "and hate thine enemy": not so; "I say unto you," saith our Lord, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children," may appear so to all mankind, "of your Father which is in heaven; who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

2. But it is sure, there is a peculiar love which we owe to those that love God. So David: "All my delight is upon the saints that are in the earth, and upon such as excel in virtue." And so a greater than he: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34–35). This is that love on which the Apostle John so frequently and strongly insists: "This," saith he, "is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another" (I John 3:11). "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he

John Wesley, *Wesley's Standard Sermons: Consisting of Forty-Four Discourses, Published in Four Volumes, in 1746, 1748, 1750, and 1760 (Fourth Edition, 1787); To Which Are Added Nine Additional Sermons Published in Vols. I to IV of Wesley's Collected Works, 1771.* Edited and Annotated by Edward H. Sugden. Volume II. London: The Epworth Press, 1921. Fifth Annotated Edition, 1964. Sermon XXXIV, "Catholic Spirit," pp. 126–146. Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation have been modernized and Americanized for this issue of *The Historical Trail*.

laid down his life for us: and we ought," if love should call us thereto, "to lay down our lives for the brethren" (I John 3:16). And again: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (I John 4:7-8). ". . . Not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (I John 4:10-11).

3. All men approve of this; but do all men practice it? Daily experience shows the contrary. Where are even the Christians who "love one another as he hath given us commandment"? How many hindrances lie in the way! The two grand, general hindrances are, first, that they cannot all think alike; and, in consequence of this, secondly, they cannot all walk alike; but in several smaller points their practice must differ in proportion to the difference of their sentiments.

4. But although a difference in opinions or modes of worship may prevent an entire external union, yet need it prevent our union in affection? Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Without all doubt, we may. Herein all the children of God may unite, notwithstanding these smaller differences. These remaining as they are, they may forward one another in love and in good works.

5. Surely in this respect the example of Jehu himself, as mixed a character as he was of, is well worthy both the attention and imitation of every serious Christian. "And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him: and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give me thine hand."

The text naturally divides itself into two parts:—First, a question proposed by Jehu to Jehonadab: "Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?" Secondly, an offer made on Jehonadab's answering, "It is": "If it be, give me thine hand."

I. 1. And, first, let us consider the question proposed by Jehu to Jehonadab, "Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?"

The very first thing we may observe in these words, is, that here is no inquiry concerning Jehonadab's opinions. And yet it is certain, he held some which were very uncommon, indeed quite peculiar to himself; and some which had a close influence upon his practice; on which, likewise, he laid so great a stress, as to entail them upon his children's children, to their latest posterity. This is evident from the account given by Jeremiah, many years after his death: ". . . I took Jaazaniah . . . and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites And I set before . . . [them]

pots full of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, Drink ye wine. But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab," or Jehonadab, "the son of Rechab, our father" (it would be less ambiguous, if the words were placed thus: "Jehonadab *our father, the son of Rechab*"; out of love and reverence to whom, he probably desired his descendants might be called by his name), "commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever: Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents [And] we . . . have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us" (Jeremiah 35:3-10).

2. And yet Jehu (although it seems to have been his manner, both in things secular and religious, to *drive furiously*) does not concern himself at all with any of these things, but lets Jehonadab abound in his own sense. And neither of them appears to have given the other the least disturbance touching the opinions which he maintained.

3. It is very possible, that many good men now also may entertain peculiar opinions; and some of them may be as singular herein as even Jehonadab was. And it is certain, so long as we know but *in part*, that all men will not see all things alike. It is an unavoidable consequence of the present weakness and shortness of human understanding, that several men will be of several minds in religion as well as in common life. So it has been from the beginning of the world, and so it will be "till the restitution of all things."

4. Nay, farther: although every man necessarily believes that every particular opinion which he holds is true (for to believe any opinion is not true, is the same thing as not to hold it); yet can no man be assured that all his own opinions, taken together, are true. Nay, every thinking man is assured they are not; seeing *humanum est errare et nescire*: "to be ignorant of many things, and to mistake in some, is the necessary condition of humanity." This, therefore, he is sensible, is his own case. He knows, in the general, that he himself is mistaken; although in what particulars he mistakes, he does not, perhaps he cannot, know.

5. I say, "perhaps he cannot know"; for who can tell how far invincible ignorance may extend? or (that comes to the same thing) invincible prejudice?—which is often so fixed in tender minds, that it is afterwards impossible to tear up what has taken so deep a root. And who can say, unless he knew every circumstance attending it, how far any mistake is culpable? seeing all guilt must suppose some concurrence of the will; of which he only can judge who searcheth the heart.

6. Every wise man, therefore, will allow others the same liberty of thinking which he desires they should allow him; and will no more insist on their embracing his opinions, than he would have them to insist on his embracing theirs. He bears with those who differ from him, and only asks

him with whom he desires to unite in love that single question, "Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?"

7. We may, secondly, observe, that here is no inquiry made concerning Jehonadab's mode of worship; although it is highly probable there was, in this respect also, a very wide difference between them. For we may well believe Jehonadab, as well as all his posterity, worshiped God at Jerusalem: whereas Jehu did not: he had more regard to state-policy than religion. And, therefore, although he slew the worshipers of Baal, and "destroyed Baal out of Israel"; yet from the convenient sin of Jeroboam, the worship of "the golden calves," he "departed not" (II Kings 10:28-29).

8. But even among men of an upright heart, men who desire to "have a conscience void of offence," it must needs be, that, as long as there are various opinions, there will be various ways of worshiping God; seeing a variety of opinions necessarily implies a variety of practice. And as, in all ages, men have differed in nothing more than in their opinions concerning the Supreme Being, so in nothing have they more differed from each other, than in the manner of worshiping him. Had this been only in the heathen world, it would not have been at all surprising: for we know, these "by" their "wisdom knew not God"; nor, therefore, could they know how to worship him. But is it not strange, that even in the Christian world, although they all agree in the general, "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"; yet the particular modes of worshiping God are almost as various as among the Heathens?

9. And how shall we choose among so much variety? No man can choose for, or prescribe to, another. But every one must follow the dictates of his own conscience, in simplicity and godly sincerity. He must be fully persuaded in his own mind; and then act according to the best light he has. Nor has any creature power to constrain another to walk by his own rule. God has given no right to any of the children of men thus to lord it over the conscience of his brethren; but every man must judge for himself, as every man must give an account of himself to God.

10. Although, therefore, every follower of Christ is obliged, by the very nature of the Christian institution, to be a member of some particular congregation or other, some church, as it is usually termed (which implies a particular manner of worshiping God; for "two cannot walk together unless they be agreed"); yet none can be obliged by any power on earth but that of his own conscience, to prefer this or that congregation to another, this or that particular manner of worship. I know it is commonly supposed that the place of our birth fixes the church to which we ought to belong; that one, for instance, who is born in England, ought to be a member of that which is styled the Church of England; and consequently, to worship God in the particular manner which is prescribed by that church. I was once a zealous

maintainer of this; but I find many reasons to abate of this zeal. I fear it is attended with such difficulties as no reasonable man can get over. Not the least of which is, that if this rule had took place, there could have been no Reformation from Popery; seeing it entirely destroys the right of private judgment, on which that whole Reformation stands.

11. I dare not, therefore, presume to impose my mode of worship on any other. I believe it is truly primitive and apostolical: but my belief is no rule for another. I ask not, therefore, of him with whom I would unite in love, Are you of my church, of my congregation? Do you receive the same form of church government, and allow the same church officers, with me? Do you join in the same form of prayer wherein I worship God? I inquire not, Do you receive the supper of the Lord in the same posture and manner that I do? nor whether, in the administration of baptism, you agree with me in admitting sureties for the baptized; in the manner of administering it; or the age of those to whom it should be administered. Nay, I ask not of you (as clear as I am in my own mind), whether you allow baptism and the Lord's supper at all. Let all these things stand by: we will talk of them, if need be, at a more convenient season; my only question at present is this, "Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?"

12. But what is properly implied in the question? I do not mean, What did Jehu imply therein? But, What should a follower of Christ understand thereby, when he proposes it to any of his brethren?

The first thing implied is this: Is thy heart right with God? Dost thou believe his being, and his perfections? his eternity, immensity, wisdom, power? his justice, mercy, and truth? Dost thou believe that he now "upholdeth all things by the word of his power"? and that he governs even the most minute, even the most noxious, to his own glory, and the good of them that love him? Hast thou a divine evidence, a supernatural conviction, of the things of God? Dost thou "walk by faith, not by sight"? looking not at temporal things, but things eternal?

13. Dost thou believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, "God over all, blessed for ever"? Is he revealed in thy soul? Dost thou know Jesus Christ and him crucified? Does he dwell in thee, and thou in him? Is he formed in thy heart by faith? Having absolutely disclaimed all thy own works, thy own righteousness, hast thou "submitted thyself unto the righteousness of God," which is by faith in Christ Jesus? Art thou "found in him, not having thy own righteousness, but the righteousness which is by faith"? And art thou, through him, "fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold of eternal life"?

14. Is thy faith ἐνεργουμένη δι' ἀγάπης—*filled with the energy of love?* Dost thou love God (I do not say "above all things," for it is both an unscriptural and an ambiguous expression, but) "with all thy heart, and with all

thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength"? Dost thou seek all thy happiness in him alone? And dost thou find what thou seekest? Does thy soul continually "magnify the Lord, and thy spirit rejoice in God thy Saviour"? Having learned "in everything to give thanks," dost thou find "it is a joyful and a pleasant thing to be thankful"? Is God the center of thy soul, the sum of all thy desires? Art thou accordingly laying up thy treasure in heaven, and counting all things else dung and dross? Hath the love of God cast the love of the world out of thy soul? Then thou art "crucified to the world"; thou art dead to all below; and thy "life is hid with Christ in God."

15. Art thou employed in doing, "not thy own will, but the will of him that sent thee"—of him that sent thee down to sojourn here awhile, to spend a few days in a strange land, till, having finished the work he hath given thee to do, thou return to thy Father's house? Is it thy meat and drink "to do the will of thy Father which is in heaven"? Is thine eye single in all things? always fixed on him? always looking unto Jesus? Dost thou point at him in whatsoever thou doest? in all thy labor, thy business, thy conversation? aiming only at the glory of God in all; "whatsoever thou doest, either in word or deed, doing it all in the name of the Lord Jesus; giving thanks unto God, even the Father, through him"?

16. Does the love of God constrain thee to serve him with fear, to "rejoice unto him with reverence"? Art thou more afraid of displeasing God, than either of death or hell? Is nothing so terrible to thee as the thought of offending the eyes of his glory? Upon this ground, dost thou "hate all evil ways," every transgression of his holy and perfect law; and herein "exercise thyself, to have a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward man"?

17. Is thy heart right toward thy neighbor? Dost thou love, as thyself, all mankind, without exception? "If you love those only that love you, what thank have ye?" Do you "love your enemies"? Is your soul full of good-will, of tender affection, toward them? Do you love even the enemies of God, the unthankful and unholy? Do your bowels yearn over them? Could you "wish yourself" temporally "accursed" for their sake? And do you show this by "blessing them that curse you, and praying for those that despitefully use you, and persecute you"?

18. Do you show your love by your works? While you have time, as you have opportunity, do you in fact "do good to all men," neighbors or strangers, friends or enemies, good or bad? Do you do them all the good you can; endeavoring to supply all their wants; assisting them both in body and soul, to the uttermost of your power?—If thou art thus minded, may every Christian say, yea, if thou art but sincerely desirous of it, and following on till thou attain, then "thy heart is right, as my heart is with thy heart."

II. 1. "If it be, give me thy hand." I do not mean, "Be of my opinion." You need not: I do not expect or desire it. Neither do I mean, "I will be of your opinion." I cannot: it does not depend on my choice: I can no more think, than I can see or hear, as I will. Keep you your opinion; I mine; and that as steadily as ever. You need not even endeavor to come over to me, or bring me over to you. I do not desire you to dispute those points, or to hear or speak one word concerning them. Let all opinions alone on one side and the other: only "give me thine hand."

2. I do not mean, "Embrace my modes of worship"; or, "I will embrace yours." This also is a thing which does not depend either on your choice or mine. We must both act as each is fully persuaded in his own mind. Hold you fast that which you believe is most acceptable to God, and I will do the same. I believe the Episcopal form of church government to be scriptural and apostolical. If you think the Presbyterian or Independent is better, think so still, and act accordingly. I believe infants ought to be baptized; and that this may be done either by dipping or sprinkling. If you are otherwise persuaded, be so still, and follow your own persuasion. It appears to me, that forms of prayer are of excellent use, particularly in the great congregation. If you judge extemporary prayer to be of more use, act suitably to your own judgment. My sentiment is, that I ought not to forbid water, wherein persons may be baptized; and that I ought to eat bread and drink wine, as a memorial of my dying Master: however, if you are not convinced of this, act according to the light you have. I have no desire to dispute with you one moment upon any of the preceding heads. Let all these smaller points stand aside. Let them never come into sight. "If thine heart is as my heart," if thou lovest God and all mankind, I ask no more: "give me thine hand."

3. I mean, first, love me: and that not only as thou lovest all mankind; not only as thou lovest thine enemies, or the enemies of God, those that hate thee, that "despitefully use thee, and persecute thee"; not only as a stranger, as one of whom thou knowest neither good nor evil,—I am not satisfied with this,—no; "if thine heart be right, as mine with thy heart," then love me with a very tender affection, as a friend that is closer than a brother; as a brother in Christ, a fellow citizen of the New Jerusalem, a fellow soldier engaged in the same warfare, under the same Captain of our salvation. Love me as a companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus, and a joint heir of his glory.

4. Love me (but in a higher degree than thou dost the bulk of mankind) with the love that is *long-suffering and kind*; that is patient,—if I am ignorant or out of the way, bearing and not increasing my burden; and is tender, soft, and compassionate still; that *envieth not*, if at any time it please God to prosper me in his work even more than thee. Love me with the love that is *not provoked*, either at my follies or infirmities; or even at my acting (if it should

sometimes so appear to thee) not according to the will of God. Love me so as to *think no evil* of me; to put away all jealousy and evil-surmising. Love me with the love that *covereth all things*; that never reveals either my faults or infirmities,—that *believeth all things*; is always willing to think the best, to put the fairest construction on all my words and actions,—that *hopeth all things*; either that the thing related was never done; or not done with such circumstances as are related; or, at least, that it was done with a good intention, or in a sudden stress of temptation. And hope to the end, that whatever is amiss will, by the grace of God, be corrected; and whatever is wanting, supplied, through the riches of his mercy in Christ Jesus.

5. I mean, secondly, commend me to God in all thy prayers; wrestle with him in my behalf, that he would speedily correct what he sees amiss, and supply what is wanting in me. In thy nearest access to the throne of grace, beg of him who is then very present with thee, that my heart may be more as thy heart, more right both toward God and toward man; that I may have a fuller conviction of things not seen, and a stronger view of the love of God in Christ Jesus; may more steadily walk by faith, not by sight; and more earnestly grasp eternal life. Pray that the love of God and of all mankind may be more largely poured into my heart; that I may be more fervent and active in doing the will of my Father which is in heaven; more zealous of good works, and more careful to abstain from all appearance of evil.

6. I mean, thirdly, provoke me to love and to good works. Second thy prayer, as thou hast opportunity, by speaking to me, in love, whatsoever thou believest to be for my soul's health. Quicken me in the work which God has given me to do, and instruct me how to do it more perfectly. Yea, "smite me friendly, and reprove me," whereinsoever I appear to thee to be doing rather my own will, than the will of him that sent me. O speak and spare not, whatever thou believest may conduce, either to the amending my faults, the strengthening my weakness, the building me up in love, or the making me more fit, in any kind, for the Master's use.

7. I mean, lastly, love me not in word only, but in deed and in truth. So far as in conscience thou canst (retaining still thy own opinions, and thy own manner of worshiping God), join with me in the work of God; and let us go on hand in hand. And thus far, it is certain, thou mayest go. Speak honorably, wherever thou art, of the work of God, by whomsoever he works, and kindly of his messengers. And, if it be in thy power, not only sympathize with them when they are in any difficulty or distress, but give them a cheerful and effectual assistance, that they may glorify God on thy behalf.

8. Two things should be observed with regard to what has been spoken under this last head: the one, that whatsoever love, whatsoever offices of love, whatsoever spiritual or temporal assistance, I claim from him whose heart is right, as my heart is with his, the same I am ready, by the grace of

God, according to my measure, to give him: the other, that I have not made this claim in behalf of myself only, but of all whose heart is right toward God and man, that we may all love one another as Christ hath loved us.

III. 1. One inference we may make from what has been said. We may learn from hence, what is a catholic spirit.

There is scarce any expression which has been more grossly misunderstood, and more dangerously misapplied, than this: but it will be easy for any who calmly consider the preceding observations, to correct any such misapprehensions of it, and to prevent any such misapplication.

For, from hence we may learn, first, that a catholic spirit is not *speculative* latitudinarianism. It is not an indifference to all opinions: this is the spawn of hell, not the offspring of heaven. This unsettledness of thought, this being "driven to and fro, and tossed about with every wind of doctrine," is a great curse, not a blessing; an irreconcilable enemy, not a friend, to true catholicism. A man of a truly catholic spirit has not now his religion to seek. He is fixed as the sun in his judgment concerning the main branches of Christian doctrine. It is true, he is always ready to hear and weigh whatsoever can be offered against his principles; but as this does not show any wavering in his own mind, so neither does it occasion any. He does not halt between two opinions, nor vainly endeavor to blend them into one. Observe this, you who know not what spirit ye are of: who call yourselves men of a catholic spirit, only because you are of a muddy understanding; because your mind is all in a mist; because you have no settled, consistent principles, but are for jumbling all opinions together. Be convinced, that you have quite missed your way; you know not where you are. You think you are got into the very spirit of Christ; when, in truth, you are nearer the spirit of Antichrist. Go, first, and learn the first elements of the gospel of Christ, and then shall you learn to be of a truly catholic spirit.

2. From what has been said, we may learn, secondly, that a catholic spirit is not any kind of *practical* latitudinarianism. It is not indifference as to public worship, or as to the outward manner of performing it. This, likewise, would not be a blessing, but a curse. Far from being an help thereto, it would, so long as it remained, be an unspeakable hindrance to the worshiping of God in spirit and in truth. But the man of a truly catholic spirit, having weighed all things in the balance of the sanctuary, has no doubt, no scruple at all, concerning that particular mode of worship wherein he joins. He is clearly convinced, that *this* manner of worshiping God is both scriptural and rational. He knows none in the world which is more scriptural, none which is more rational. Therefore, without rambling hither and thither, he cleaves close thereto, and praises God for the opportunity of so doing.

3. Hence we may, thirdly, learn, that a catholic spirit is not indifference to all congregations. This is another sort of latitudinarianism, no less absurd and unscriptural than the former. But it is far from a man of a truly catholic spirit. He is fixed in his congregation as well as his principles. He is united to one, not only in spirit, but by all the outward ties of Christian fellowship. There he partakes of all the ordinances of God. There he receives the supper of the Lord. There he pours out his soul in public prayer, and joins in public praise and thanksgiving. There he rejoices to hear the word of reconciliation, the gospel of the grace of God. With these his nearest, his best-beloved brethren, on solemn occasions, he seeks God by fasting. These particularly he watches over in love, as they do over his soul; admonishing, exhorting, comforting, reproofing, and every way building up each other in the faith. These he regards as his own household; and therefore, according to the ability God has given him, naturally cares for them, and provides that they may have all the things that are needful for life and godliness.

4. But while he is steadily fixed in his religious principles, in what he believes to be the truth as it is in Jesus; while he firmly adheres to that worship of God which he judges to be most acceptable in his sight; and while he is united by the tenderest and closest ties to one particular congregation,—his heart is enlarged toward all mankind, those he knows and those he does not; he embraces with strong and cordial affection neighbours and strangers, friends and enemies. This is catholic or universal love. And he that has this is of a catholic spirit. For love alone gives the title to this character: catholic love is a catholic spirit.

5. If, then, we take this word in the strictest sense, a man of a catholic spirit is one who, in the manner above-mentioned, gives his hand to all whose hearts are right with his heart: one who knows how to value, and praise God for, all the advantages he enjoys, with regard to the knowledge of the things of God, the true scriptural manner of worshiping him, and, above all, his union with a congregation fearing God and working righteousness: one who, retaining these blessings with the strictest care, keeping them as the apple of his eye, at the same time loves—as friends, as brethren in the Lord, as members of Christ and children of God, as joint partakers now of the present kingdom of God, and fellow heirs of his eternal kingdom—all, of whatever opinion or worship, or congregation, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; who love God and man; who, rejoicing to please, and fearing to offend God, are careful to abstain from evil, and zealous of good works. He is the man of a truly catholic spirit, who bears all these continually upon his heart; who, having an unspeakable tenderness for their persons, and longing for their welfare, does not cease to commend them to God in prayer, as well as to plead their cause before men; who speaks comfortably to them, and

labors, by all his words, to strengthen their hands in God. He assists them to the uttermost of his power in all things, spiritual and temporal. He is ready “to spend and be spent for them”; yea, to lay down his life for their sake.

6. Thou, O man of God, think on these things! If thou art already in this way, go on. If thou hast heretofore mistook the path, bless God who hath brought thee back! And now run the race which is set before thee, in the royal way of universal love. Take heed, lest thou be either wavering in thy judgment, or straitened in thy bowels: but keep an even pace, rooted in the faith once delivered to the saints, and grounded in love, in true catholic love, till thou art swallowed up in love for ever and ever!



John Wesley
(1703–1791)

John Wesley at Forty Years of Age

From a scarce Engraving published in 1743. Engraved by J. Cochran. Printed in Luke Tyerman (1819?–1889), The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A., Founder of the Methodists, Vol. I (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1870), frontispiece. Reproduced in William Haven Daniels (1836–1908), The Illustrated History of Methodism in Great Britain and America, from the Days of the Wesleys to the Present Time (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1879), p. 203.

Catholic Love

Charles Wesley
(1707–1788)

First published 1755

- 1 Weary of all this wordy strife,
These notions, forms, and modes, and names,
To Thee, the Way, the Truth, the Life,
Whose love my simple heart inflames,
Divinely taught, at last I fly
With Thee and Thine to live and die.
- 2 Forth from the midst of *Babel* brought,
Parties and sects I cast behind;
Inlarged my heart, and free my thought,
Where'er the latent truth I find,
The latent truth with joy to own,
And bow to Jesus' name alone.
- 3 Redeem'd by Thine almighty grace,
I taste my glorious liberty,
With open arms the world embrace,
But cleave to those who cleave to Thee;
But only in Thy saints *delight*,
Who walk with God in purest white.
- 4 One with the little flock I rest,
The members sound who hold the Head;
The chosen few, with pardon blest,
And by th' anointing Spirit led
Into the mind that was in Thee,
Into the depths of Deity.
- 5 My brethren, friends, and kinsmen these,
Who do my heavenly Father's will,
Who aim at perfect holiness,
And all Thy counsels to fulfil,
Athirst to be whate'er Thou art,
And love their God with all their heart.

6 For these, howe'er in flesh disjoin'd,
Where'er dispersed o'er earth abroad,
Unfeigned, unbounded love I find,
And constant as the life of God;
Fountain of life, from thence it sprung,
As pure, as even, and as strong.

7 Join'd to the hidden church unknown
In this sure bond of perfectness,
Obscurely safe, I dwell alone,
And glory in th' uniting grace,
To me, to each believer given,
To all Thy saints in earth and heaven.



C. Wesley

Charles Wesley, "Catholic Love." This hymn was appended to John Wesley's sermon, "Catholic Spirit," in 1755. From *Wesley's Standard Sermons*. Edited and Annotated by Edward H. Sugden. Volume II. London: The Epworth Press, 1921. Fifth Annotated Edition, 1964. Introduction to Sermon XXXIV, "Catholic Spirit," pp. 126–127.

Charles Wesley
(1707–1788)



Bishop James Osgood Andrew
(1794–1871)

Second Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South
Born in Georgia, May 3, 1794; entered the South Carolina Conference in 1812; was ordained Bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1832; seceded in 1844; and became Bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Died in New Orleans, March 2, 1871.

From One to Three Protestant, Southern, and Free Methodism

*Presentation at a Seminar Entitled
"Divided We Stand"
Commemorating the 25th Anniversary of the Formation of
The United Methodist Church*

*Evangelical United Methodist Church
Clarksboro, New Jersey
Saturday, October 9, 1993*

Rev. Robert B. Steelman

*Conference Historian
Southern New Jersey Conference
The United Methodist Church*

*Author of What God Has Wrought: A History of the
Southern New Jersey Conference of The United Methodist Church*

John Wesley's Methodism began as a spiritual evangelical movement, a stirring of the Spirit, following his 1738 heartwarming Aldersgate experience. The movement developed classes, bands and societies; built meeting houses and sent preachers to the distant lands of America. Yet it remained a religious Society, as Wesley termed it. It did not become a church until the 1784 Christmas Conference, following somewhat Wesley's instructions, organized the American Methodists into the Methodist Episcopal Church, created a Discipline, ordained deacons and elders, chose its bishops and set out to "preach the gospel, reform the continent and spread Scriptural holiness across the land." Within a century the Methodist Episcopal Church was the dominant Protestant denomination in this country in what Winthrop Hudson called "The Methodist Age in America."¹

Yet, within that same expanse of time, there were divisions of major consequences. First was the Methodist Protestant division. The Methodist Protestants, styled "reformers" by some, "mavericks" or worse by others, sought to make their church more democratic. It mirrored the democratic idealism of the day made popular by the Jacksonian democrats.

These reformers sought to limit the autocratic powers of the bishop by the election, rather than the appointment, of presiding elders, granting to preachers the right to appeal their appointments, and by giving the laity a voice and a vote in the Annual and General Conferences. The issue of elective presiding elders was the keystone of the Methodist Protestant attack.

¹Winthrop S. Hudson, "The Methodist Age in America," *Methodist History*, April 1974, p. 15.

Introduced into the General Conference as early as 1812, it gathered enough support so that in 1820 it was actually voted in by a 65-to-25 vote. However, the objection of the bishops caused it to be suspended until the next General Conference. In 1824 the petition lost by a scant 63-to-61 majority and by 1828 the Methodist Protestants were on their way out.

From its inception, the Methodist Protestants had no bishops, elected their presiding elders, gave its preachers the right of appeal and opened the floor of their conferences to the laity. Yet, as Bishop John Warman, a former Methodist Protestant, said: after this interesting experiment in church government had been formed, "the heavens did not fall, neither did the millennium arrive."²

Soon after the Methodist Protestant division, the pressures of what to do about slavery further divided the church in 1844 into the Methodist Episcopal Church—the church of the north,—and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Slavery divided the church, and the key questions focused on what to do with Bishop James O. Andrew of Georgia, who had become by inheritance the owner of slaves (as was his wife) in a state which did not allow manumission. But there were other issues of considerable concern.

It became clear early in the 1844 General Conference debate that the northern Methodists would not agree to a slave-holding bishop and that the southern Methodists would not acquiesce to having the General Conference depose one of its episcopal members. However, the underlying question was: Who controls the church—the General Conference or the bishops? Where does ultimate authority repose? If in General Conference, then that body can discipline or depose a bishop. But if bishops have rights of their own other than being merely officers of the Conference, then General Conference has no right to turn them out. I am not sure that this question of authority has ever been totally resolved in the church.

It took until 1939, nearly 100 years, before reunion took place among these three branches of American Methodism. The "long road" to reunion received its impetus at the 1876 Cape May Conference when delegates from the north and south met for the first time since division. The key principle adopted made possible eventual reunion. It was that "both churches were legitimate branches of Episcopal Methodism." The road to reunion went through four stages: Fraternal Relations, Federation, an abortive attempt to unite Episcopal Methodism, and finally, in league with the Methodist Protestants, Union. In 1939 the three churches became one, and The Methodist Church was born.

²John B. Warman, "Our Methodist Protestant Heritage," *Methodist History*, January 1979, p. 71.

There is one other division within Methodism that needs to be mentioned, and that is the Free Methodist Church. It is especially relevant since 1993 is the 100th Anniversary of the death of the Free Methodist founder, Benjamin Titus Roberts. It developed out of a reform movement in the old Genesee Conference in Western New York State. The reformers, led by Benjamin Roberts, followed a platform calling for a return to the Wesleyan teaching of "scriptural holiness," a more strict observances of attendance at class meetings, the holding of family prayers, singing by the congregation, plainness of dress, simplicity and spirituality in worship, freedom for the slaves, freedom from oath-bound secret societies, and free seats in the congregation. Conference leaders called for more moderation and expelled Roberts from the Conference in 1858. He appealed to the 1860 General Conference, which refused to hear his case on a technicality, and he was out of the church. Later that year at Pekin, New York, the Free Methodist Church was organized with Roberts named as the first superintendent.



Rev. Nicholas Snethen
(1769–1845)

Admitted to Conference, 1794; united with Methodist Protestant Church;
editor of *The Methodist Protestant*.



Rev. Orange Scott
(1800–1847)

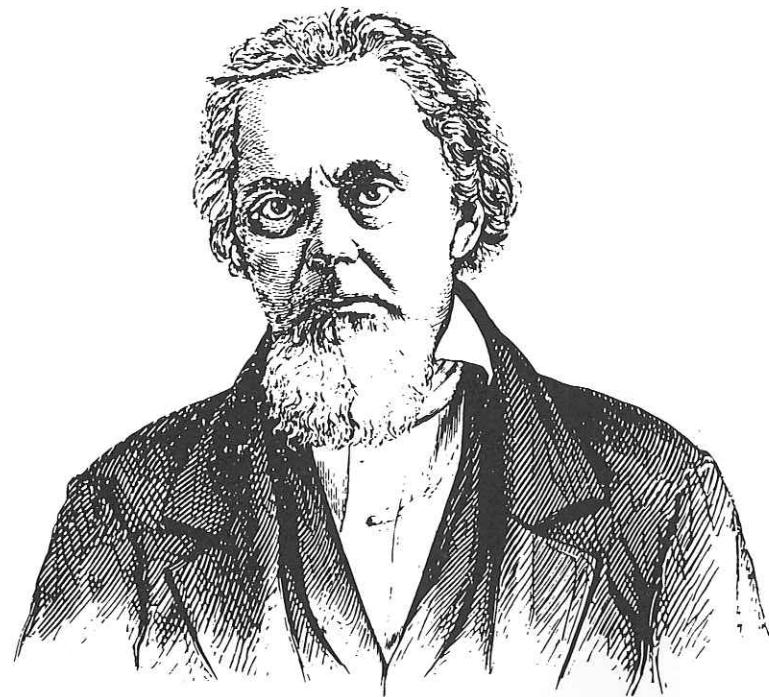
*Photo from Ira Ford McLeister,
History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America
(Syracuse, New York: Wesleyan Methodist Publishing Association, 1934),
frontispiece.*

Rev. Orange Scott
(1800–1847)

Orange Scott was born February 13, 1800, at Brookfield, Vermont. He was converted at a camp meeting in September 1820 and immediately united with the Methodist Episcopal Church. He became a class leader and was licensed as an exhorter within one year. He began itinerant work in 1821 on the Bernard District. He was received on trial by the New England Conference in 1822. He was appointed Presiding Elder of the Springfield District in 1830, and a few years later was Presiding Elder of the Providence District. He was a delegate to General Conference in 1832 (Philadelphia), 1836 (Cincinnati), and 1840 (Baltimore).

Orange Scott wrote and spoke frequently and fervently against slavery. After the 1840 General Conference he despaired of seeing the Methodist Episcopal Church as an anti-slavery force. In 1842 he withdrew from the church. With others he organized the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America (later called the Wesleyan Methodist Church and now the Wesleyan Church) on May 31, 1843, in Utica, New York. He was the first president of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America. He died July 31, 1847, at Newark, New Jersey. On his deathbed he said, "My only hope is in the infinite merit of my adorable Master and Redeemer. . . . When I am gone my old friends in the M.E. Church will remember me with kindness, sympathy, and love. . . . Yes, all is peace, all is peace."





*Yours for the whole truth
Luther Lee.*

Rev. Luther Lee
(1800–1889)

*Photo from Ira Ford McLeister,
History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America
(Syracuse, New York: Wesleyan Methodist Publishing Association, 1934),
facing p. 27.*

Rev. Luther Lee

(1800–1889)

Luther Lee was a native of Schoharie, New York. He was born November 30, 1800, and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church in his youth. He was licensed to preach in 1821 and admitted to the Genesee Conference in 1827. He later became a member of the Black River Conference. In 1838 he located and became active as a lecturer for the anti-slavery societies of New York and New England. He re-entered the traveling ministry in 1843 when the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America (later called the Wesleyan Methodist Church and now the Wesleyan Church) was organized; in 1844 he was president of its first General Conference. In 1867 he returned to the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church. His published works included *Universalism Examined and Refuted*, *Systematic Theology*, *Immortality of the Soul*, and *Slavery Examined in the Light of the Scriptures*. He died in 1889.





Bishop Peter Böhler
(1712-1775)

Born at Frankfurt-on-the-Main, Germany, December 31, 1712. Ordained a Moravian minister at age 25 by Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760). Instructed John and Charles Wesley on the nature of saving faith. Died April 27, 1775.

John Wesley's Experience of the Heart at Aldersgate Aldersgate Message

*A Devotional Message for the 251st Anniversary of
the Heart-Warming Experience of John Wesley
and in anticipation of the designation of the
Batsto-Pleasant Mills Meeting House
as a United Methodist Historic Site.*

*Presented at the Batsto-Pleasant Mills Meeting House,
Pleasant Mills, New Jersey.
Aldersgate Day, Wednesday, May 24, 1989.*

The Batsto-Pleasant Mills Meeting House, erected in 1808 and dedicated by Bishop Francis Asbury in 1809, is one of the oldest meeting houses in southern New Jersey to be in continuous use for worship. Its building has been carefully preserved. Among others buried in its burial ground is the Rev. Thomas Haskins, early Methodist preacher, friend of Asbury, prominent Philadelphia civic and religious leader, and one of the editors of Asbury's Journal.

Mrs. Penny Moore

Past President, S.N.J. Conference Historical Society

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

Romans 8:1-12 kjv

It seems fitting that we should be observing John Wesley's Aldersgate experience of 251 years ago, and especially that we should observe it in this lovely old church, which reminds us of our precious heritage.

Our Scripture for tonight is taken from Romans 8:1-12.

Go back in time with me now to the year 1735.

You will recall that John and Charles Wesley had embarked on the ship *Simmonds* on October 14, 1735, for America to serve as missionaries for the

propagation of the faith to Indians in Georgia. It was a new colony at the time under General James Oglethorpe.

The trip was a stormy one in many ways. Not only was there rough water and poor weather, but John was not successful in converting the Indians or the colonists. He had a troubling love affair with Sophia Hopkey, and he decided to return to England.

So discouraged was he, that on his return voyage he began to question his own spiritual state. He feared death and felt himself a failure. The author James Richard Joy, in his book, *John Wesley's Awakening*, says:

But he was now painfully conscious that, with all his conformity to the requirements of the Ritual of his Church and his unflagging attention to the discharge of his duties as a minister, he was returning to England with less confidence in his spiritual soundness than he had when he embarked for Georgia two years before, with the chief motive "to save his own soul."³

Fortunately, on the voyage he met some Moravians whose way of life, lack of fear, and Christian witness during storms, plus complete assurance of the acceptance of God, captured his imagination.

One person especially, Peter Böhler, the ordained head of the Moravian brotherhood, was a help to him. He found John in a state of spiritual confusion. When Wesley said he was giving up preaching because "How could he preach to others when he had no saving faith himself?" Peter Böhler replied, "Preach faith until you have it and then because you have it, you will preach it."

Forces were set in motion—forces of a spiritual awakening—as Wesley began to test this idea in his own preaching.

Go with me now to Aldersgate Street, an old London street that takes its name from one of the original gates in the northern wall of the city and is just a few minutes' walk from Saint Paul's Cathedral. Imagine what it was like 200 years ago when Nettleton Court was a narrow opening from the east side of Aldersgate. Near No. 28 was a meeting place of a religious society where James Hutton, friend of John, regularly attended. He probably suggested that John go to this meeting in this particular building. You are aware of the story reenacted for us so often when John felt his heart strangely warm and realized that Christ had died to forgive him, even him, of his sins. The famous date was May 24, 1738—the date we celebrate here tonight. This was John's own Pentecostal experience, one that changed his entire life and preaching. No longer was John an "in-church" person. Now he became an "in Christ" person, eager to go out into the streets, the prisons, the sweat shops, or wherever Christ led him to tell of this indwelling Christ available

³James Richard Joy (1863–1957), *John Wesley's Awakening* (Dallas, Tex.; Nashville, Tenn.; Richmond, Va.: Methodist Publishing House, 1937), p. 55.

to all who would repent of their sins and accept Christ as their personal Saviour. It was as though an electric light had suddenly illuminated his soul and he could see clearly for the first time the reality of Christ within.

At Aldersgate John Wesley found the key to unlock his faith. Now he could say, "I've found a personal Saviour. I've found a Friend, oh, such a Friend!" As the hymn writer puts it:

I've found a Friend, oh, such a Friend!
He loved me ere I knew Him;
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus He bound me to Him.
And 'round my heart still closely twine
Those ties which naught can sever,
For I am His, and He is mine,
Forever and forever.⁴

James Grindlay Small

From this time forth, John Wesley was forever and ever aflame for the Lord. Once plucked from the flame—now aglow for him. He began to preach that religion is to be experienced and not just talked about. It is not a matter of the mind but of the heart, and whosoever will may come.

Aldersgate was not just a beatific experience but the beginning of a movement of Christian love and concern in England, a movement that made history by gathering the world for Christ because Methodism became a way of life—everywhere, not just on one day of the week but a daily walk of faith wherever this new heart-warming faith was preached.

For me, it was at the Providence Avenue Methodist Church in Chester, Pennsylvania,⁵ at the age of thirteen, when Percy Crawford held evangelistic services in our church.

For others, it is a gradual acceptance and then the realization that Christ did save me, that he is available right now and closer to me than breathing.

I attended a spiritual workshop at Drew. One day we were asked to go out of the classroom and meditate on Christ in our lives. When we returned, a young Anglican priest asked our teacher, "How do you really find Christ? I've read of him, taught about him, and believe in him. But how do I find him?"

⁴James Grindlay Small (1817–1888), "I've Found a Friend," *The Revival Hymn Book, Second Series*, 1863.

⁵Providence Avenue United Methodist Church in Chester, Pennsylvania, held a special service of celebration, commemorating 107 years of ministry, on Sunday afternoon, June 26, 1994. This celebration was the last service at Providence Avenue United Methodist Church, and the church is now closed.

The teacher, Mrs. Newman, came down from the lectern and stood facing the priest, with their toes touching, and said to him: "Christ is here with you right now, closer than I am to you. He is not someone out there, for he dwells here within you. Open your heart and look within. Experience right now the indwelling Christ in your own heart."

Such was John Wesley's experience of the heart at Aldersgate. He discovered anew the indwelling Holy Christ who died, rose again, and indwells through the Holy Spirit. In these troubled times, we need to preach, teach, and witness to the indwelling love of Jesus Christ in our own lives—the love and power available to all to accept him and welcome him into their hearts.

Let us pray:

In the quiet of these moments with thee, Lord, help us to open our hearts anew—to seek again the power and love of Aldersgate and Pentecost; and having found the experience of the warm heart of salvation, let us go forth to tell others. In Jesus' name. Amen.



Nettleton Court, off Aldersgate Street
The scene of John Wesley's conversion

Of Forgotten Churches and Books

Rev. Alex Borsos, Jr.

*Former Pastor, New Egypt United Methodist Church
Member, Commission on Archives and History*

Within the boundaries of Plumsted Township, Ocean County, were two small but active houses of worship which are now forgotten or nearly forgotten in our Conference: the Old Zion M.E. Church, and the Zoar M.E. Church, the properties of which are under the trusteeship of the New Egypt United Methodist Church, New Egypt, New Jersey.

The history of the first of these—the Old Zion M.E. Church—was written in 1885 by the Rev. William T. Abbott, a former Chaplain in the Union Army.¹ It covers the years 1789–1907, and was updated² in 1957 by the Rev. B. Melvin Stillwell.

Prior to the year 1800, the society worshipped in private families. In 1789 Joseph Cromwell, preacher in charge of Trenton circuit, introduced Methodism at Hornerstown. Meetings were soon established at the home of Job Horner who resided on a farm which included the present property of Zion Church. He lived in a log house that stood near the church, which at that time stood to the southeast of where the church now stands.

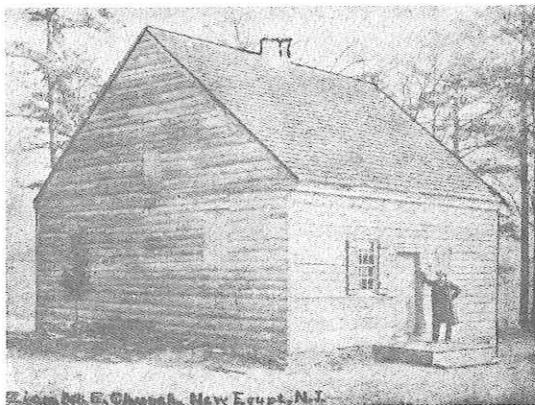
Job Horner gave an acre of ground to the society for the church and grave yard purposes, and strange to say no deed was given until thirty-eight years afterwards, when the property of the donor had passed into other hands.

In the year 1800 the society was composed of eight or ten members. The following names are on the list: Job Horner, Ann Horner, James Horner, Margaret Horner, John Smith, Hannah Smith, Francis Ralph and Elsie Ralph. These four men and their wives formed the first class in this place.

The church was commenced in the fall of 1800 and finished in the following spring. It was a small building, the size cannot be definitely ascertained. It was a frame building, weather-boarded but not plastered, it was filled in with mud and the ceiling boarded. The entrance was on the south side, and there was also a door on the west side, but not hung, they were fastened by wooden bars. There were five windows in the church, two on the north side, two on the south side, and one in back of the pulpit on the east side. The pulpit was well elevated, after the fashion of the day. The seats on each side of the pulpit had backs, while those in the front had none. This humble building was honored by the presence of Bishop Asbury, first American Bishop who preached the "Word of Life" from the pulpit.

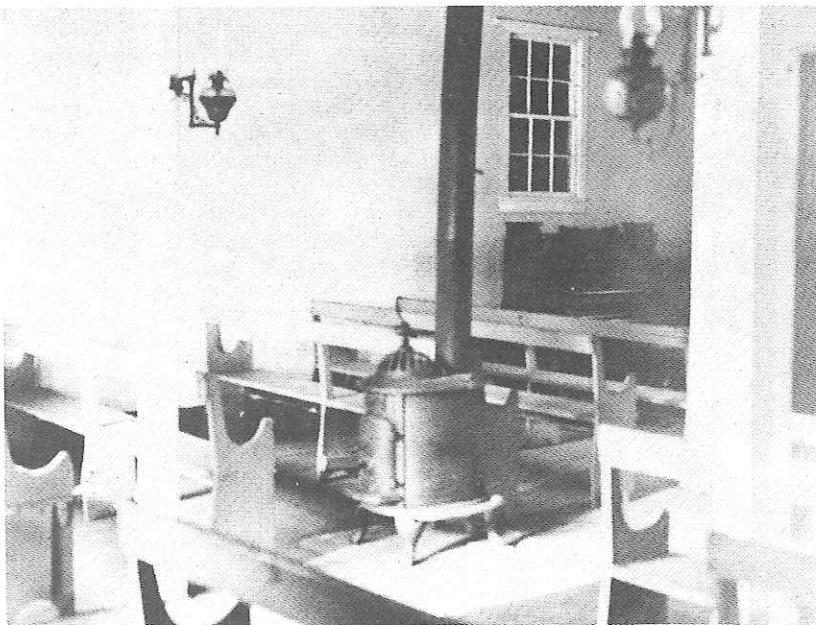
¹Robert B. Steelman, *What God Has Wrought*, p. 83.

²From a commemorative sheet marking the restoration of the building, 1955–1956.



Old Zion M.E. Church

Illustration from William T. Abbott,
"History of Old Zion M.E. Church, 1789-1907"



Old Zion Methodist Church

Interior view of Old Zion Methodist Church on Lakewood Road showing ancient benches, wood stove, and antique kerosene lamps

Photo courtesy of Dorothy Stevens Mount of New Egypt

In his journal, Asbury records that visit on April 29, 1806:

I preached at Mount Zion, in the woods, near a little town called Egypt. We dined at Fuller Horner's, and rode on to Stephen Barcalow's. We have made nearly forty miles to-day. I enjoy great evenness of mind and life in my labours.³

Abbott's history continues:

Thirty-seven years passed away before a board of trustees were appointed. On the twenty-first day of December 1837, a meeting was called for the purpose of electing a board of trustees for said church.

It was at the instigation of Rev. Thomas G. Stewart preacher in charge of New Egypt Circuit to which Zion belongs.

The meeting was organized by Dr. Geo. F. Fort. The following are the names of the first board of trustees: Robert C. Jameson, Alfred Wilson, James Chafey, Moses Horner, James L. Curtis, William Herbert and Francis Ralph.

The board met on the 13th of January 1838 and organized, and assumed the name of Zion Methodist Episcopal Church, the name it has been known by ever since.

On the 12th of May 1838 the trustees received a deed for the property from Fuller and Joshua Horner.

About the close of 1836 (December) soon after the election of trustees, the building took fire and burned down. The society made an effort and by the next fall had another church on the spot where the former had stood. This church was a slight improvement upon the former one, being plastered and having three additional windows. The pulpit was on the north side, and the entrance on the south. This church was dedicated by Rev. Dr. William Mann.

In 1847 the church was found to be too small to accommodate [sic] the congregation, and was enlarged to its present size, and dedicated by Rev. Thomas G. Stewart.

Zion was a week-day appointment until 1839 when it was changed to a Sabbath appointment. The Zion class has existed eighty-four years and during that time has had nine class leaders: John Smith, Samuel Warner, Fuller Horner, James Chafey, Jacob G. Foulks, David Archer, John Messler, Adonijah Erickson and Fuller B. Erickson.

The class has greatly varied since its organization. It has at times numbered over 50 then falling far below that number. In 1867 it numbered 34. At this time (1885) it only numbers about 12 or 14.

In 1862 the grave yard was enlarged one half acre.

During the pastorate of Rev. Jos. G. Crate, the society was allowed to pass into the hands of G. V. Braisted and remained under his care until the spring of 1885.

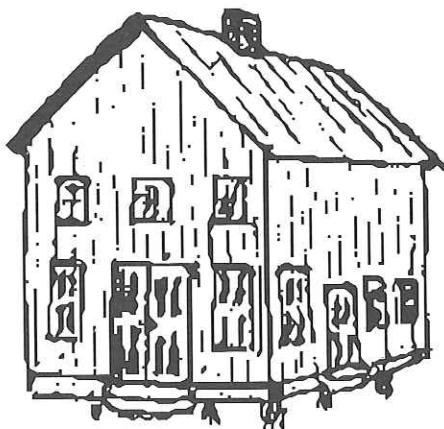
In the spring of 1885 Rev. W. T. Abbott, took the oversight of church property, and gave notice according to law for the election of five trustees to serve said church. The following men were elected: George Lewis, Thomas Archer, Levi Challender, Pitman Cranmer and Ridgeway Sherman.

³Francis Asbury, *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury* (Volume II: The Journal, 1794 to 1816), p. 503.



Old Zion M.E. Church

Old Zion restored with addition of bell tower
Photo courtesy of Dorothy Stevens Mount of New Egypt



Zoar Church

Drawing by Dorothy Stevens Mount

On Feb. 9, 1887 after the usual lawful notice the following persons were elected trustees. George Lewis, Thomas Archer, Henry Moore, Samuel Archer and Richard Hopkins.

There will be regular services held in this old house where our forefathers worshipped, at least two Sundays a month, and will doubtless become a part of the New Egypt and Colliers Mills charge. The services will probably start in May. Dr. J. B. Haines, Presiding Elder of this district, says, "We must not let Old Zion die."

B. Melvin Stillwell, writing in 1957, updated the history of Old Zion:

For a few years after 1907, church services were held at Old Zion Church several times a year, by the pastors of the New Egypt Methodist Church. But for the past twenty years or more, the people seemed to lose interest. Then, in 1955 the proceeds from the sale of "Random Rhymes" a booklet of poems were donated to the "Restoration of Old Zion." This also brought many contributions from many interested parties, and as a result Old Zion has again been restored, with a new roof, complete painting inside and out along with other repairs. The long list of contributors were published in The New Egypt Press. The Old Zion Restoration committee was composed of Mrs. Earl Ivins, Mrs. Myrtle Horner, Mr. George Hartshorn and Mr. W. Clement Moore, but ALL who contributed their services and money deserve the credit.⁴

In the years since then, the Trustees of Old Zion and the New Egypt United Methodist Church have sponsored an annual service of worship on the last Sunday of September, thereby agreeing with John B. Haines' exhortation back in 1907, "We must not let Old Zion die."

The second house of worship was the Zoar Methodist Episcopal Church. Nothing remains of the building itself except the memories of what it used to look like, where it stood, and the cemetery which is the "resting place of many of our oldest settlers."⁵

On March 11, 1809, land was deeded by Thomas Shinn, in North New Egypt or the section known as Snuff Mills, on which the Society erected the Zoar M.E. Church. The original trustees of the Zoar Church were: Jacob Foulks, Jonas Matson, William Turner, Joseph Foulks, Abraham Brown, Benj. Lawrence and Henry Reed Dec. 6, 1834 the trustees of the Zoar Church became an incorporated body. The old Zoar Cemetery is still in existence and the property of the New Egypt Methodist Church. In 1834, New Egypt was made a separate Circuit Appointment, with Rev. Henry Boehm as Pastor. (Rev. Boehm lived more than 100 years.)

In the year 1850, under the pastorate of C. S. Downs and J. W. Seran, a moving revival was held with more than 300 persons converted. This created the necessity for a new and larger building, which was erected on the present site and dedicated in December, 1851

⁴Quoted from restoration commemorative sheet.

⁵Dorothy Stevens Mount, *A Story of New Egypt and Plumsted Township*, 1979, p. 9.

March 25, 1852, the trustees, having been empowered by an Act of the New Jersey Legislature, conveyed the deed of the Zoar Church to the New Egypt Church.⁶

In a published history of New Egypt and Plumsted Township,⁷ Dorothy Stevens Mount, a member of the New Egypt United Methodist Church and the New Egypt Historical Society, drew the picture on p. 52 and described the building from her memories of it:

... the Zoar Church . . . was built on a hill in 1809. This was a plank sided building with a double doored entrance on either side of which was a single window. A large ironstone step was at the door sill. On entering and to the side was a stairway leading to a balcony where several, no more than cubicle sized rooms, for separate classes were located. The downstairs was the assembly room. The inside walls were of white hard plaster with a chairboard running around its side.

As the population flourished particularly in the southern settlement known as New Egypt, a new edifice was built . . . at the Midville location⁸ and the Zoar Church stood idle.⁹

Dorothy Stevens Mount reminisced to this writer that the Zoar Church was still standing in the 1930s, but memory fails just as to when it was torn down. A modern rancher was built on the site which is opposite the cemetery on Brown Lane.

In 1992 the local Boy Scout Troop took on the task of clearing the cemetery of decades of brush and undergrowth and dead trees. Within the approximately 90 × 250-foot plot of ground there are only twenty-two identifiable graves. Seventeen headstones are set in place, most of which are unreadable; five other graves are marked with large stones, and four headstones are lying together near a fence line, none of which seem to have had any inscriptions on them.

A Rare Find in a Dump

While I was pastoring the New Egypt United Methodist Church in the 1970s, Mrs. Dorothy Stevens Mount showed me an almost completely intact Steward's Book for what was then the New Mills (Pemberton) Circuit. At the time I was not greatly interested. Then in January 1993 I contacted her in regard to writing the foregoing histories of the Old Zion and Zoar Churches. When she showed me the book again, my interest was greatly piqued, especially by the Register of Marriages performed by various minis-

⁶M. Claude Thompson, in the Centennial Service booklet of the New Egypt Methodist Church, 1951.

⁷Dorothy Stevens Mount, *A Story of New Egypt and Plumsted Township*, 1979.

⁸The site of the present New Egypt United Methodist Church.

⁹Dorothy Stevens Mount, *A Story of New Egypt and Plumsted Township*, 1979, p. 9.

ters which covered the last sixteen pages; the earliest marriage was dated August 12, 1787, and the last marriage was dated January 23, 1813.¹⁰

Mrs. Mount donated the book to the Ocean County Historical Society following my visit. In a note attached to the donation she told how she had come into possession of this rare find:

We who are interested in the history of Ocean County are thankful that a Mr. Edward Erickson, on whose property was a dump, found the book of a Methodist Circuit Minister on this dump. Mr. Erickson gave it to me approximately in the year 1952.¹¹

Along with probable other records, it had been stored in the attic of what had been the parsonage of the Zoar M.E. Church, and when a new owner bought the property, everything in the attic went to the dump.



Old Zoar Cemetery
Photo by Rev. Alex Borsos, Jr., February 1993

¹⁰A chronological list appears at the end of this article as Appendix I.

¹¹Quoted by Elizabeth Ann Grant in her preface to the transcription of *Steward's Book for the New Mills Circuit (Pemberton), 1783-1815, Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1993. A copy of this transcription is in the Southern New Jersey Conference Archives Room located on the campus of The Pennington School, Pennington, New Jersey.

Elizabeth Ann Grant of the Ocean County Historical Society undertook the labor of love to transcribe these records, and in the process found a Registry of Baptisms within its pages (which I did not find in the few moments I had spent leafing through the brittle pages). This registry is included in Appendix II for the benefit of the wider audience *The Historical Trail* reaches, since access to its contents would be otherwise limited. There is a mine of genealogical wealth here which could have been lost forever!

Part of the inherent value of the book lies in the fact that it predates the previously oldest circuit record and Steward's Book for the Salem Circuit¹² by 6 years. The first entry is dated May 14, 1783. When one reads through the financial accountings of the Quarterly Meetings, it is obvious that such meetings were not strictly financial but ministerial as well. Scattered throughout there are these entries:

1783 June ye 10th Paid Jonoathan Budd (8 shillings and 6 pence) the sugar is for poor woman

pay ye funeral Exps for Brotr Chumands Child (1 pound, 13 shillings, 10 pence)

for poor man in Society

Robert Sparkes To care for child

To Farthar Expence for Smallpox

Two poor friends

Also noted was the changeover from pounds, shillings, and pence to dollars, cents, and half-cents. The last dated entry for British currency was June 2, 1799, and the first record of dollars and cents was at the Burlington Quarterly Meeting dated July 27 and 28, 1799, which showed a balance of \$81.94.

The last financial accounting entry was for the Quarterly Meeting held at New Mills on March 4-5, 1815. Of note in the disbursement column was "Bad money that would not pass—\$ 3.91"! That page is reproduced on p. 57.

Disbursements	
Paid Nathan Swain	Passing Oldn 5.00
do, John Thor	Expenses - 12.37
do, do, do, do	Quartago 50.17
do, do, do, do	deficiencies for Children 34.2h
do, do, do, do	Parker Corday Quartago 20.00
do, do, do, do	for Clement - - - - - 57
Bad money that would not pass 3.91	
Sent to the Conference - - - 20.00	
Remaining in the hands of the Stewards 146.38	
June 3, 1815 Thor \$ 167.72	
Paid Revd. Nathan Swain	
Book expenses for the year - - - - - \$ 15.81	
Do, of the Cash Balance for new large Books for the school 5.00	
Exact Paid for Books, \$ 20.84	
for the Circuit \$ 2.27	

A page from the Steward's Book of the New Mills Circuit, 1783-1815

¹²Robert B. Steelman, *What God Has Wrought*, p. 31.

Appendix I

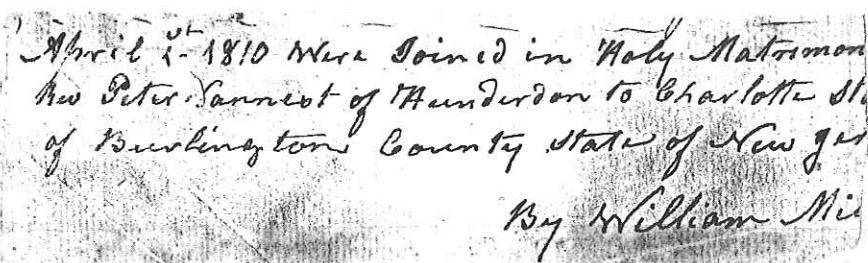
*Registry of Weddings
New Mills Circuit
1787-1813*

The registry of weddings recorded in the Steward's Book of the New Mills Circuit was not kept in strict chronological order as the book was passed on from Presiding Elder to Presiding Elder. For example, the first page of the registry records a wedding for August 12, 1787, and immediately below is one for December 6, 1812, followed by another dated January 23, 1813. Twenty-four different Deacons/Elders officiated at the 81 marriages recorded.

Misspellings abound: "boath residens" for "both residents"; "Washunton township" for "Washington Township"; "Gloster" for "Gloucester" (County); "Lewkis" for the name Lucas; "Robans" for Robbins; and "Littia" for Lydia. These are only a few examples.

These may be the only surviving records of these marriages; hence their value to genealogical research.

The weddings of at least two of our Conference members are included here: Solomon Sharp and Peter Vannest. The page on which Vannest's wedding is written is marred by its unreadable day of marriage, and all that survived of his bride's maiden name is "St---," the page being broken off because of its brittleness. And although the last name of the officiating pastor was broken off at the same edge there is certainty that it was William Mills (see illustration below).



The list of marriages which follows is in strict chronological order for ease of reference. Misspellings have been retained. In a few instances possible alternate spellings are followed by question marks because of the difficulty of reading through water stains, faded writing, or just plain poor handwriting. Most of the entries were prefaced with the formula "Was Lawfully joined in Holy Matrimony."

There are ten marriages marked with an asterisk (*): These were transcribed by Elizabeth Ann Grant, who was able to spend more time with the Steward's Book than I was; hence this listing represents our combined efforts.

August 12, 1787

Isaac Budd and Nancy King (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: William Gill, Elder
Witnesses: Jonathan Budd and Ann Budd

August 11, 1789

Jonathan Budd and Mary Woolston (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: John McCloskey

August 15, 1789

William McCullough (of Sussex Co) and Elizabeth Budd (of Burlington Co)
Officiant: John McCloskey

October 17, 1789

Joseph Gray and Abigail Bowker (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: John McCloskey

December 27, 1789

Thomas Brown and Martha Harker (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: John McCloskey

February 2, 1790

Uriah Thomson and Margaret Pitman (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: William Budd, Deacon

October 7, 1790

William Jackson (Methodist Preacher of Queen Anne's County, Maryland) and Rachal Grandin (Monmouth Co)
Officiant: William Budd, Deacon

November 10, 1790

Robert Lewkis and Mary Robans
Officiant: John Merrick
Witnesses: James Wilkinson and Littia Ogborn

November 23, 1790

William Lindin Brown and Hannah Clarke
Officiant: John Merrick
Witnesses: Samuel Lowlin and Ginny Clarke

February 6, 1791

John Rows and Nancy Anderson
Officiant: John Merrick
Witnesses: Samuel Emley and Elizabeth Sill

February 6, 1791

Daniel Rensan and Sally Rows
Officiant: John Merrick
Witnesses: Samuel Coward and Levinia Coward

March 3, 1791

Lanson White and Mary Weston
Officiant: William Budd

May 1791 (day unrecorded)

Antony Pettit and Anne Haines (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: William Budd

June 26, 1791

Benjamin Pittman and Mary Fox (both of Hanover Twp, Burlington Co)
Officiant: William Budd

November 13, 1791

Simon Pyle (of Bethel Twp, Chester Co., Penn'a) and Susannah Leonard
(Shrewsbury Twp, Monmouth Co)
Officiant: William Budd

April 28, 1792

James Hunter Sterling and Elizabeth Robbins (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: William Budd

August 11, 1793

Stacy Watkinson and Mary Heisler (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: Robert Hutchinson, Deacon

(Undated but is recorded directly underneath previous entry)

Jacob Heisler and Ann King (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: William Budd, Deacon

October 17, 1793

Thomas Foulk and Clarisay Bonnet (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: William Budd

February 16, 1794

Levi Rogers (Methodist Minister, Montgomery Co, Penn'a) and Anna George
(Burlington Co)
Officiant: Robert Conn, Elder

July 7, 1794

Edward Ervin and Abigail Jones (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: Isaac Robinson, Deacon

January 17, 1797

Asaehl Coats and Mary Streaker (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: Benjamin Fisler, Deacon

February 8, 1798

Solomon Sharp (of Maryland) and Jimime Budd (of Burlington Co)
Officiant: Zenas Conger, Deacon
Witnesses: Theodore VanWych and Mary Streek

March 28, 1799

John Bodine and Mary Fort (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: Zenas Conger, Deacon
Witnesses: Jonathan Page and Rebechah Budd

May 16, 1799

Wesley Budd (of Cumberland Co) and Sarah Budd (Burlington Co)
Officiant: Solomon Sharp, Elder
Witnesses: Jonathan Page and Rebechah Budd

October 10, 1799

Thomas Sill and Charity Rouse (both of Upper Freehold Twp, Monmouth Co)
Officiant: Johnson Dunham, Deacon
Witnesses: Joseph Rouse and Polly Coward

October 10, 1799

Daniel Coward and Betsy Rouse (both of Upper Freehold Twp, Monmouth Co)
Officiant: Johnson Dunham, Deacon
Witnesses: Joseph Rouse and Polly Coward

October 15, 1799

Jonathan Page (of Monmouth Co) and Rebechah Budd (of Burlington Co)
Officiant: William Budd, Deacon
Witnesses: Joseph Rouse and Sarah Budd

October 17, 1799

Joseph Rouse and Mary Coward (both of Monmouth Co)
Officiant: Richard Sneath, Elder
Witnesses: John Polhemus and Elizabeth Sill

March 1800 (day unrecorded)

Caleb Warner and Rebechah Harker (both of Upper Freehold Twp, Monmouth
Co)
Officiant: Johnson Dunham, Deacon

March 1800 (day unrecorded)

Stephen Skellinger and Sarah White (both of Little Egg Harbor Twp, Burl Co)
Officiant: Johnson Dunham
Witnesses: Samuel Skellinger and Pierson Moorhouse

March 26, 1800

David Harr (of Monmouth Co) and Phebe Molsbrough (of Burlington Co)
Officiant: Solomon B. Sharp, Elder
Witnesses: John Ross/Rose? and Jamima Sharp

November 15, 1800

John Smith and Nancy Horner (both of Upper Freehold Twp)
Officiant: Levin Moore, Elder
Witnesses: Samuel Horner and Wife

1800 (month and day unrecorded)

Isaac Austin and Amy Harding (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: Samuel Coate, Elder
Witnesses: Isaac Conrow and Mary Hunter

November 29, 1800

Thomas Throp and Ellinor Imley (both of Upper Freehold Twp)
Officiant: Samuel Coate, Elder
Witnesses: John Imley and Rebechah Imley

February 19, 1801

Thomas Scroggy and Sarah Mullen (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: Solomon Sharp, Elder
Witnesses: Job Jones and Polly Dobbins

May 21, 1801

Job Jones and Mary Dobbins (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: William Budd, Deacon
Witness: Samuel Dobbins

August 23, 1801

John Steepy and Theodocia Mills (both of Upper Freehold Twp)
 Officiant: Jesse Jests
 Witnesses: "In the presence of the Society at the New Mills M[eeting] house." Also mentioned is Isaac Budd, Clerk.

October 18, 1801

John Claypole and Thomason Haley (both of Upper Freehold Twp)
 Officiant: Thomas Jones, Elder
 Witnesses: Thomas Emley and Wife

February 15, 1802

James Anderson and Mary Whodo (Blacks) (both of Burlington Co)
 Officiant: Thomas Jones, Elder
 Witnesses: Hezekiah Toy and Wife

March 28, 1802

William Howel and Hannah Carmen (both of Burlington Co)
 Officiant: Solomon Sharp, Elder
 Witnesses: Isaac Budd and John Rose

August 16, 1802

William Johnson and Phebe Pool (both of Little Egg Harbor Twp)
 Officiant: David Bartine, Elder

September 13, 1802

Jacob Purkins and Sarah Parrant (both of Dover Twp, Monmouth Co)
 Officiant: David Bartine, Elder

September 25, 1802

Daniel Jones and Mary Force (both of Burlington Twp, Burlington Co)
 Officiant: David Bartine, Elder

October 31, 1802

Elias Simon and Deborah Reed (both of New Hanover Twp, Burlington Co)
 Officiant: David Bartine, Elder

November 25, 1802

Ralph Smith (of Philadelphia) and Grace Hancock (of Burlington Co)
 Officiant: David Bartine, Elder

November 25, 1802

William Crushaw and Martha Budd (both of Burlington Co)
 Officiant: William Budd, Deacon

December 2, 1802

William Warren and Rachel Crushaw (both of Burlington Co)
 Officiant: William Budd, Deacon

December 2, 1802

Samuel Dobbin and Elizabeth Scroggy (both of Northampton Twp, Burlington Co)
 Officiant: William Budd, Deacon

December 30, 1802

Barzilar Write (of New Hanover Twp) and Susannah Bodine (of Washington Twp)
 Officiant: David Bartine, Elder
 Witnesses: Francis Bodine Junior and Elizabeth Throp

February 10, 1803

Charles Hugh (of Northampton Twp) and Abigail Moore (of Evesham Twp)
 Officiant: Michael Coate, Elder

February 24, 1803

William Brick (of Chester Twp) and Martha Woolston (of Evesham Twp). both of Burlington Co)
 Officiant: Michael Coate, Elder

February 24, 1803

Francis Bodine and Elizabeth Throp (both of New Hanover Twp, Burlington Co)
 Officiant: Solomon Sharp, Elder
 Witnesses: Robert Mout and Polly Budd

March 2, 1803

John Kelly (of Salem County) and Margaret Fort (of Burlington Co)
 Officiant: Solomon Sharp, Elder
 Witnesses: Mary Bodine and Polly Shinn

August 23, 1803

Charlton Barns and Rebekah Rindell (both of Burlington Co)
 Officiant: Joseph Totten, Elder
 Witnesses: Barzilan Pinchot and Lydia Budd

September 1, 1803

Thomas Vannote and Sarah Fish (both of Monmouth Co)
 Officiant: Joseph Totten, Elder

January 1804 (day unrecorded)

William Shinn (of Springfield Twp) and Sarah Budd (New Hanover Twp, both of Burlington Co)
 Officiant: Joseph Osborn, Deacon
 Witnesses: Claton Lamb and Sally Budd

February 5, 1804

Pierson Hambleton and Mary Ireton (both of Burlington Co)
 Officiant: Joseph Totten, Elder

March 5, 1804

Doughty Reed and Phebe Spragg (both of Monmouth County)
 Officiant: Joseph Totten, Elder

March 26, 1804

John D. Beck and Susannah Hammel (both of Burlington Co)
 Officiant: Joseph Totten, Elder

April 26, 1804

James McEther (of Philadelphia) and Lydia Budd (of Burlington Co)
 Officiant: Solomon Sharp, Elder
 Witnesses: Armon Dairs and Elizabeth Budd

September 2, 1804

William Fenton and Deborah Spragg (both of Monmouth Co)
Officiant: Peter Vannest, Elder

October 2, 1804

Malcom Johnson and Abigale Paterson (both of Gloucester Co)
Officiant: Peter Vannest, Elder

November 19, 1804

Moses Hamell and Phebe Merrill (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: Peter Vannest, Elder

November 19, 1804

John Peak and Nancy Baxter (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: Peter Vannest, Elder

***January 17, 1805**

William Harnell/Hammell? and Prisilla Hains (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: Peter Vannest, Elder MEC

***January 17, 1805**

John H. Mullin and Mary Birdsall (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: Peter Vannest, Elder

***January 20, 1805**

William Johnson and Sarah Parker (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: Peter Vannest, Elder

***September 26, 1805**

Stacy Barton (?) and Elizabeth Budd (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: William Budd, Deacon

***April 8, 1807**

William Hocktman (?) and Elizabeth Hewlings (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: Thomas Ware, Elder

***June 9, 1807**

Jacob Eggbert and Sarah Mason (both of New Mills, Burlington Co)
Officiant: James Smith, Elder

September 24, 1807

Levi Barry and Lucretia Pettit (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: James Smith

October 19, 1807

Philip Warner and Hannah Allen (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: James Smith

November 16, 1807

Daniel Stockdon and Ann Allen (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: James Smith

April 1810 (day unreadable)

Rev. Peter Vannest (of Hunterdon Co) and Charlotte St---? [page torn] (of
Burlington Co)
Officiant: William Mills

***May 20, 1810¹³**

William Letts and Mary For---bury [Fortunbury?] (both of Monmouth Co)
Officiant: Michael Coats

***August 30, 1810**

Zachariah Picket and Agnes [unreadable] (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: Michael C[oats?]

***December 8, 1810**

Francis Ralph and Ann [unreadable]
Officiant: ? ?

***March 12, 1811**

Joseph Woodward and Mary Loveland (both of Burlington Co)
Officiant: Michael C[oats?]

December 6, 1812

Jacob Carman (of New Mills) and Amelia Fagins (of Monmouth Co)
Officiant: Samuel Budd, Elder

January 23, 1813

Ellis Adams and Aesha Leek (both of Little Egg Harbor Twp)
Officiant: Samuel Budd, Elder

¹³Elizabeth Ann Grant found these next four marriages (May 20, 1810; August 30, 1810; December 8, 1810; and March 12, 1811) on the other side of the page which recorded Peter Vannest's wedding. She said that the page was very faded and torn and that the writing was barely legible. Regarding the marriage of Joseph Woodward and Mary Loveland (March 12, 1811), Elizabeth Ann Grant said that these *might* be their names; she "stretched hard to assume this."

Appendix II

*Registry of Baptisms
By the Methodist Elders and Deacons
of the New Mills Circuit
1788-1797*

Four pages of Baptism Records were entered into the accounting section of this ancient book. The records start in 1788 and run through November 1797. The accounting section of the document picks up after these baptisms in September 1804.

Elizabeth Ann Grant

- 1 { Baptized Elizabeth and David son and daughter of William Budd
2 { February 18th 1788
- 3 Baptized Elizabeth daughter of William Shinn
February 18th 1788
- 4 { Baptized Samuel & John Budd sons of William Rulen
5 { February 18th 1788
- 6 Nancy the wife of George Briggs (or Biggs?)
February 18th 1788
- 7 Baptized Nancy daughter of John King
February 18th 1788
James Oliver Cromwell

Baptized by Ezekial Cooper March 2 1788

8 Jacob Rowand }
9 Prudence Rowand }

10 William Budd son of William Budd

11 John Henderson

12 Thomas Youlin (?)

13 Chilion Foster

14 Mary Morton

15 Mary Budd wife of Levi Budd

16 Elizabeth Budd daughter of Joseph Budd

17th John Thing*

18 Samuel Atkinson

19 Asa Chumard

20 William Wright

by ye Revd James O Cromwell & ye Revd Ezekial Cooper

*Note: No date entered for this group of baptisms—assume date of March 2 1788, but handwriting is different.

- June ye 15th 1789 Baptized By John McClaskey Deacon
Aron Wonderly son of John Wonderly
- Oct ye 8 1789 Was Baptized Johnafbury Cann son of Robert Cann and Rachel his wife of they City Burlington By Francis Afbury Bishop
- Feb 11th 1790 Was Baptized Mary Shaw Sterling Daughter of James and Rebeckah Sterling of the City of Burlington by John McCloskey Elder aged 9 weeks & 5 days
- March 18 1791 Was Baptized John Ridgway Jun of Mountholly by me Wm Budd Deacon
- November the 6 1794 Was Baptized John Smith of Monmouth County Aged 39 years by Levi Rogers
- November 6 1794 Was Baptized Hannah Smith the wife of John Smith of Monmouth County—aged 38 years By Levi Rogers
- November 6 1794 was Baptized James Munny Aged 56 years by Levi Rogers
- July 12th 1795 Was Baptized Abigail Nugent of Burlington County aged 1(?) years by John Merrick Elder
- July 12th 1795 was Baptized Theadocia Budd daughter of Isaac and Ann Budd aged 2 years
And John Fountain Budd aged 4 months by John Merrick Elder
- December 9th 1796 Was Baptised Susannah Stout Daughter of David and Theodocia Stout aged (no age written in) by Thomas Everard Elder
- November 5th 1797 Was Baptized Nancy Budd daughter of Isaac and Nancy Budd aged (no age written in) by Jno McClaskey Elder
- November 5th 1797 Was Baptized Mary Watkins daughter of Stacey & Mary Watkins Aged (no age written in) by Jno McClaskey Elder
- November 5th 1797 Was Baptized Hannah Keeler Daughter of William and Theodocia Keeler Aged (no age written in) by Jno McClaskey Elder

[Note the use of the colonial "s" ("f") in the entries for June 15, 1789 ("McClaskey"), and October 8, 1789 ("Johnafbury" and "Afbury").—Ed.]

To Dorothy Stevens Mount of New Egypt, who granted me access to the treasure of the Steward's Book of the New Mills Circuit. I wish only that I had had more time to spend with it, but what time I had put me in personal touch with the colonial Methodist Episcopal Church of New Jersey.

To New Egypt United Methodist Church and her Pastor, The Rev. Paul J. Amey, who allowed me to photocopy the bulk of the marriage registry of "The Book."

To Richard Strickler and Elizabeth Ann Grant of the Ocean County Historical Society in Toms River for their cooperation and delightful telephone conversations about "The Book"; but especially to Elizabeth Ann for her "difficult labor of love," as Richard called it, in transcribing the colonial handwriting of so many pages into her computer, and for donating a copy to the Southern New Jersey Conference Archives Room located on the campus of The Pennington School.

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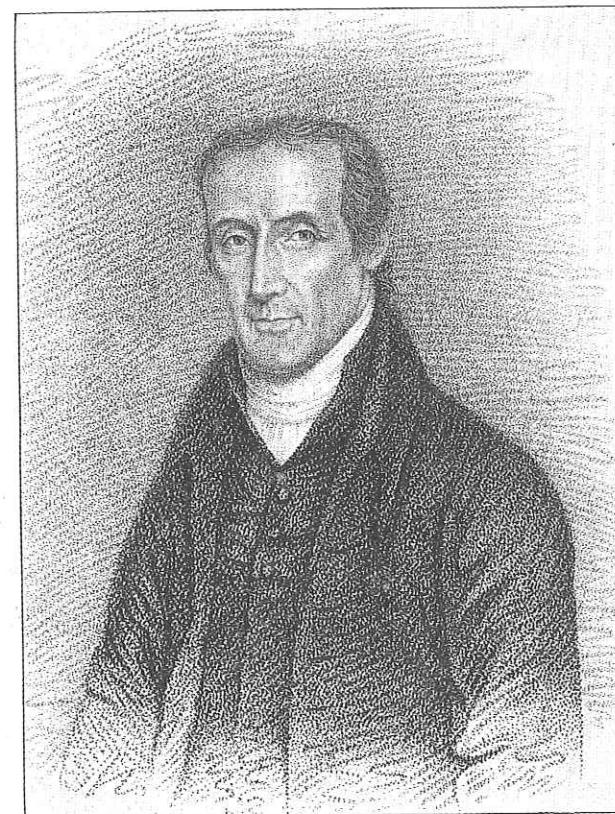
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Rev. D. Ezekiel Cooper.

Rev. Ezekiel Cooper
(1763–1847)

Born in Caroline County, Maryland, February 22, 1763. Entered the ministry in 1785. Appointed book agent in 1798. John Wesley's last letter to America was addressed to Ezekiel Cooper: "Lose no opportunity of declaring to all men that the Methodists are one people in all the world, that it is their full determination so to continue." He died in Philadelphia February 21, 1847, and was buried in Saint George's Church, Philadelphia.



Richwood United Methodist Church, Richwood, New Jersey
Photo courtesy of Richwood United Methodist Church

History of Methodism in Richwood, New Jersey 1992

Compiled by Rev. Howard L. Cassaday

[In 1992 Richwood United Methodist Church published a history, compiled by the Rev. Howard L. Cassaday, Pastor. Some of the material was based on a presentation given by the Rev. Robert B. Steelman, Conference Historian, at the anniversary celebration on Sunday, October 20, 1985. We are pleased to present excerpts from The United Methodist Church, Richwood, New Jersey, 1992.—Ed.]

John Early of Aura: New Jersey Pioneer Methodist

The first Methodists in the general area of Richwood, New Jersey, were lay people, and since Gloucester County was part of the Irish Tenth of the division of New Jersey, many were from Ireland. One of these was John Early (or Earley) (1738–1828). He was the first of the pioneer Methodists in New Jersey. He came to America in 1764.¹

In 1773, John purchased land along "Still Run Creek," near today's Aura. Later he bought a two-thirds interest in a sawmill, and still later purchased the balance. His house was a log cabin, located about one mile Northeast of today's Aura Methodist Church. At a later date the house was enlarged and remained standing till 1911 when it burned down.

The operation of the sawmill gave John the opportunity to meet people from near and far. He regularly took occasion to expound the teachings of Methodism.

Prior to the erection of the Union Meeting House, built in 1806, Early's home was the regular Sunday afternoon preaching place on the Bethel Circuit (which was set off from the Salem Circuit in 1790).

As the local laity and the Circuit Riders spread Methodism, more circuits were formed. The Salem Circuit (1788) was formed to care for all of South Jersey, and preachers, Joseph Cromwell, Nathaniel B. Mills, and John Cooper, were assigned to the some 30 preaching places to be covered from Camden to Cape May. The work grew rapidly, so that the next year (1789) the Circuit was divided in half and the Bethel Circuit (350 members) came into being. This Circuit included today's Camden, Gloucester, and Atlantic Counties. Also that year the Annual Conference was held in New Jersey for the first time.

¹From Emily M. Johnson, "John (Earley) Early," *The Historical Trail*, 1976, pp. 22–25.

In 1803 the Gloucester Circuit was formed—now one of eight circuits in New Jersey. Later, at the General Conference of 1836, New Jersey was made a separate conference with 17,600 members.

White Horse, Campbell's Cross Roads, Mount Pleasant

Considering now the history of the local area, we find it first identified as White Horse, this as early as 1815. By the year 1818 we find reference to a tavern that was opened—it used the area name—the White Horse Tavern. White Horse was rather an isolated locality, just suited for the gathering of a class of persons whose appetites would naturally lead them to congregate at such a place for seasons of conviviality—hence it was given the name "Hell Town."²

There are early references (March 1823) to Class Meetings being held at the Campbell's residence. It is believed that this house was near to the location of the Clem's Run Schoolhouse. The Local Preacher's and Exhorter's Report for the First Quarterly Conference meeting of the Gloucester Circuit (1823) lists John Early in attendance.³

About 1830 the class meeting at the Campbell home was moved to the Clem's Run Schoolhouse.

Tradition holds that the keeper of the White Horse Tavern, William Katts, in due time became one of the advocates of religion, joined the Class, gave up the tavern business, and at a later date became a leader of the Class. The last owner of the Tavern was Jacob Batten when it burned down (1844) and was not rebuilt. It is interesting to note that in 1860 when thoughts of building a church were in the air, that the secretary of the Planning Meeting, Albert Atwood, wrote the following letter to the local newspaper, *The Constitution* (June 19, 1860):

Those readers who are familiar with this locality, know very well that a few years [decades] ago this place was notorious, not so much for the wickedness of the local residents, as for being the resort of persons from all parts of the country, who assembled here in large numbers, and engaged in horse racing, gambling, duel fighting, rum drinking, and Sabbath breaking. A brighter day has dawned upon this place. The long frequented haunt known as the White Horse Tavern has been broken up, its dingy walls have crumbled to ruins. This old sink of pollution has ceased to send forth its stream of moral corruption upon the surrounding country. Several of the more aged residents have survived the grave long enough to see a thorough change take place in the temporal and moral condition of this community. Not only has the far-famed "Death Factory" been torn down, but numerous dwellings have been erected.

²Cushing and Sheppard, *History of Gloucester, Salem, and Cumberland Counties* (1883), p. 249.

³James Osborne, *History of Richwood Methodist Church*, 1960.

A large number of farms have been made from brush and timber land, which compare favorably with any in the county....

About 1832 this area became known as Campbell's Cross Roads. About 1840 the name changed again, this time being called Mount Pleasant. That same year, the Journal of the Rev. Joseph J. Sleeper, pastor 1840–1841, recorded preaching at Clem's Run School on May 2nd at 3 P.M. He noted that the class had 23 members, one local preacher, and one class leader. So we see that while the Circuit Riding preacher traveled the wider circuit, the leadership for the local class and society was given by the local preacher, the exhorter, the class leader, and the stewards. And it was together, the laity and the clergy, through their faith, their zeal, and their commitment, that the spark of Methodism flamed into a strong fire that in due time was to spread across the continent.

A few years later, about 1840, Francis A. Campbell, Sr., opened a general store at the crossroads. In 1855 a second school was built uptown located on the site of today's Academy—for a better accommodation of the increased population. Richard Skinner, Jr., was the first teacher.

At this school another class began to meet, with Richard Skinner, Sr., as leader. Could this be the continuation of the group that was earlier meeting at the Eastlack home? This meeting was made on Sunday afternoon, and in fair weather the services were held in the beautiful grove of trees surrounding the schoolhouse.⁴



Uptown Schoolhouse, Richwood, New Jersey
Photo courtesy of Richwood United Methodist Church

⁴Cushing and Sheppard, p. 252.

A Church Is to Be Built

By 1860 (Rev. Edwin Waters, pastor), the prior letter to the newspaper (by Albert Atwood) reported:

The people of this vicinity have in contemplation the erection of a church edifice this present season. We doubt not but that they will succeed in this enterprise, as they have "a mind to work." The site selected is directly opposite the location of the old White Horse Tavern. This site affords a commanding view of the surrounding country. How great will be the change, and how true, that "where sin abounded, grace shall much more abound." May heaven crown the efforts of this people with abundant success.

Pursuant to notice, a meeting of the inhabitants was called on May 22nd, 1860, to consider Matters relating to the proposed enterprise. [Probably it was held at the home of Francis A. Campbell, Sr.] After opening the meeting with prayer, chairman, the Rev. Edwin Waters proceeded to business. It was ascertained that nearly \$2000 had been pledged for the completion of the work, and that double that amount could probably be secured by canvassing the place, and the surrounding vicinity. Encouraged by this report, they moved the election of a Board of Trustees.

The following resolutions were read and adopted. Resolved: That the dimensions of the church should be 38 feet wide by 56 feet long, with 28 foot posts. Resolved: That we shall have a basement story and side galleries to the audience room. Resolved: That we meet next Saturday afternoon to clear the ground on which the church shall be erected. Resolved: That a vote of thanks be tendered to the chairman and secretary of this meeting for services they have rendered us. Resolved: That we hereby request the secretary to send a copy of the proceedings of this meeting to the Woodbury Constitution and also to the Gloucester County Times for publication. After the adoption of the afore said resolutions, the meeting was adjourned.

The deed for the ground was dated August 2, 1860, wherein Francis A. Campbell, Sr., and wife Abigail Campbell, deeded to the five trustees, two acres of land for the sum of \$200. The site for the new Methodist Church at Mount Pleasant (today's Richwood) was located midway between the two school houses and across from the site of the old White Horse Tavern. Shortly the cornerstone was laid by the Presiding Elder of the Bridgeton District, the Rev. Samuel Y. Monroe. The completed building was dedicated by Bishop Levi Scott (1802-1882) in February 1861. He spoke on a text from Psalm 137:5-6.

What Was Happening Around Town?

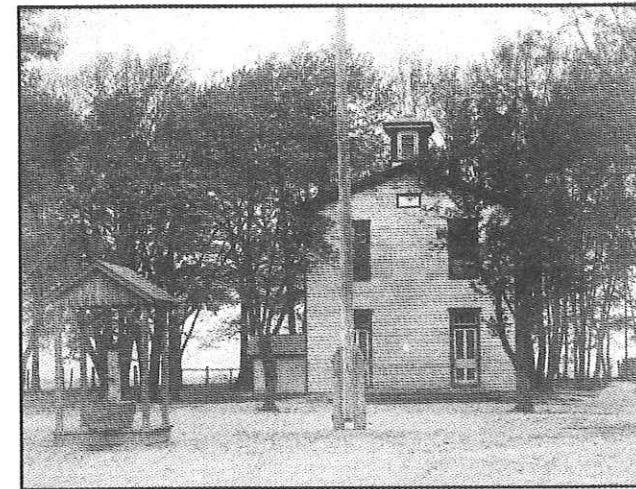
In 1862 arrangements were made for a Post Office. Charles Knight was the first Postmaster and worked out of a corner of Campbell's store at the Western crossroads. In the early days mail was carried by foot from the Pitman railroad station to Richwood. In 1900, though Richwood had become a "money order" Post Office, the Postmaster was resigning because of too little

business, which he felt did not pay for his extra trouble. At the time, the Post Office was the dearest spot to the hearts of many country youth. The way they crowded around the little Post Office was out of all proportion to the amount of business done. It brought the young folks into social contact, and many would never have become acquainted with their neighbors but for the country Post Office. But now it seemed doomed.⁵

However, a patriotic woman came to the rescue, and Mrs. Nellie Ramsey was made Postmistress.

Five Points

In 1868 the town's name was changed from Mount Pleasant to Five Points (noting the two multiple road intersections found herein). In 1870 (Rev. James F. Morell, with Charles C. Souder, Lay Preacher, was leading the church work) the one-room Mount Pleasant School was replaced by the present two-story Academy (at a cost of approximately \$2000). Note: With no school in Pitman at this time, the children of that community walked to Five Points to school. In 1951 the empty Academy was sold at auction, being purchased by a group of interested citizens of the town, and is today well used as a community center.



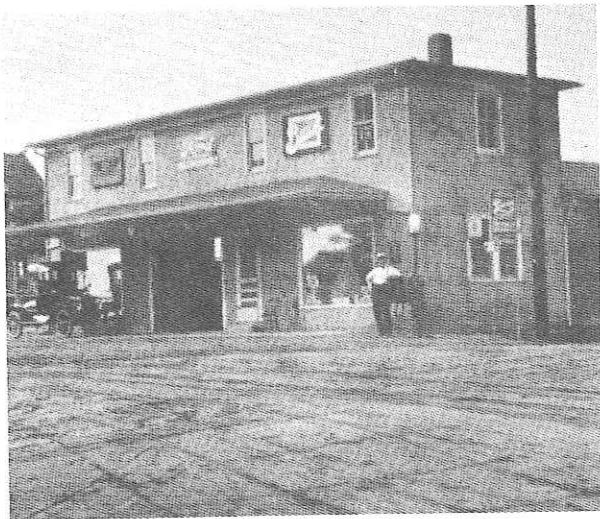
Five Points Two-Story Schoolhouse, Richwood, New Jersey
Photo courtesy of Richwood United Methodist Church

⁵Notes from Lina Heritage, town historian, at Gloucester County Historical Society, Woodbury, New Jersey.

Let us at this point consider some of the Lay Pastors who have assisted the appointed Circuit Pastors. From 1863, shortly after the building of the church, the Gloucester Circuit was divided and we became part of the Union church, the Aura (Richwood) Circuit of four churches. From 1863 till the 1890s Charles C. Souder was regularly serving as Local Preacher (especially at Richwood). In 1890 when Aura and Richwood became a separate Charge, Charles was our key leader. About 1900, J. Howard Porch began to prepare. When he became involved, Souder's work diminished (there were now only the two churches). Another Local Pastor, helping at Richwood, was the Rev. Charles Y. Ulrich (1889-1976), who was a retired pastor from Philadelphia and who had moved here. He taught the Men's Class for many years.

Richwood

In 1889 (Rev. Edward H. Durell, with C. Souder, Lay Preacher) as the railroad was coming through—from Glassboro to Mullica Hill—the town's name of Five Points could not be used for this stop (another town was already so named). In considering what new name to use, it was reported that "Fancy Joe" Jackson, the blacksmith, suggested Richwood, from his young cousin's name, Girard Richwood Marshall (who recently lived in Ocean City until his death). The name was accepted. Note, during the preceding winter, the blizzard of 1888 stranded the railroad train crew in Richwood, and they stayed several days at Bailey Souder's home.



Eastlack's Garage, Richwood, New Jersey
Photo courtesy of Richwood United Methodist Church

In 1899 (Rev. N. Palmer Stanton, with Souder and David Fisler) it was reported that the pastor's duties were to be divided equally between the two churches as follows: Aura, Sunday morning, Sunday evening, every second Sunday; Richwood, Sunday afternoon, Sunday evening every second Sunday.

In 1913 James L. Eastlack built a garage diagonally across from today's Post Office. It all began in 1908, when J. L. purchased a used Model "R" Ford Runabout. The two sons, Allen and Clayton, became very much interested in this \$900 purchase. In 1910 J. L. began to sell automobiles from his bicycle shop business in Richwood. The shop was a part-time line along with his carpenter work. A sub-dealer's contract was signed with Ford in 1911. In 1913 a dealer's contract was signed and the garage built. An addition to the building was made in 1918. The dealership was now selling three Ford products—Fords, Lincolns, and Fordson Tractors. About 1930 Ford required tractor dealers to discontinue handling cars. For many years Clayton Jr. and Allen conducted the tractor business in Richwood.

In 1920 (Rev. Nathan B. Trainor, with H. Porch, Lay Preacher) a published industrial directory noted: "Richwood is situated in rich agricultural country; the soil is good, and the crops consist largely of sweet and white potatoes, onions, tomatoes, cabbage, peppers, and corn. The climate is free from malaria (mosquitoes) and healthful in every respect."

The Church in the 1920s

In 1923 (Rev. Henry J. Heinemann, 1923-1926) the Ladies' Aid was organized with 59 members. They were invited to meet with the trustees at the parsonage on November 16th to discuss plans for placing a heating system in the church. The trustees said they would remove the dirt under the building and asked the Ladies Aid to pay the expenses for the heater. The work was completed December 21st, including the necessary chimney, at a cost of \$416.55.

This same year the R.F.L.M. Sunday School Class was organized. At a program held June 9, 1924, Mrs. Florence Madara Molinek reported, "Thirty four years ago a group of five active, healthy, and handsome teen age boys met in the Ladies Aid building, located behind the church. They wanted and needed Christian fellowship."

In 1924 the outside of the church was painted (\$267). In 1925 the stained glass windows were installed, and later that year an electrically lighted chandelier and side lights were installed. June 4th that same year the Men's Sunday School Class was organized, and they met in the Ladies' Aid building. Mr. James L. Eastlack was the president until his death in 1944, (for 19 years). On April 23, 1943 the class was renamed the J. L. Eastlack Class in his honor. The class had 62 charter members. Mr. Charles W. Doutt was

named class teacher; he was a railroad person living in Pitman, and he taught until 1945 when he received his local preacher's license and went off to pastor at Port Elizabeth and Cumberland. He did return as Richwood's pastor in 1950.

John Stratton was entertainment chairman and an active class member. By the next year, with an average of 30 members attending, in February, they decided to bring cakes to the monthly class meetings. Also that year they began to provide the flowers for Mother's Day. In 1927 they began to give a \$2.50 gold piece to a member's family when a wife gave birth. In 1928 they contributed \$25 towards the building of new Sunday School rooms (built 1940). For 50 years there were just two teachers, Charles Doutt and Rev. Charles Ulrich.

The 1930s and 1940s

In 1934 (Rev. Eugene L. Nixon) the Senior Choir was organized. Mrs. Lillian Mills reported:

I came to Richwood that year and joined the choir which Mrs. Nixon led. Estella Eastlack (wife of C. N. Eastlack, Sr.) was organist. Another leader was Edith Porch, and we had rehearsals in the homes of the choir members, with a social following. One thing that many remember was the coconut ice cream recipe that Edith brought back from Florida. In 1941-1944 when Rev. Orville Peterson was pastor, Lillian, his wife led the music. When Rev. Herbert J. Belting was pastor (1944-1948), his wife Nancy was a member of the choir, and most of the time we met at their house in Pitman for rehearsals, which Dr. Belting always enjoyed. Nancy was famous for her homemade doughnuts and coffee.

In 1940 (Rev. William R. McClelland) the first Sunday School rooms were added to the church, to the rear, behind the pulpit. In 1942 (Rev. Orville T. Peterson, 1941-1944) the Junior Choir was organized. This followed a very successful Vacation Bible School the summer before. The first result was the forming of an Epworth League for the youth on Saturday afternoons. The pastor's wife Lillian was in charge, and Lillian Mills was her assistant. Soon that group of youth formed the Junior Choir. Earlier, Edith Porch had organized a teenage choir. The J.O.Y. Sunday School Class bought materials, and the class members made choir gowns.

In the mid 1900s the community obtained several lots to provide the recreation area across the road from the church. In 1954, land was deeded from Anna Buck to Clayton N. Eastlack, Sr. Earlier, Viola Porch had deeded land to Mr. Eastlack. In 1940 James L. Eastlack and his wife deeded land to Clayton, and again in 1949. Subsequently, lands were transferred to the Community Academy group in 1960.

The Sunday School Wing and the Church Today

In 1955 (Rev. Charles W. Doutt, 1950-1959) plans were finalized, and an addition to the building for the Sunday School was erected. There were classrooms for six groups on the top floor and a large lower floor, some to be used for classes. Note that it was even back to Dr. Belting's time, as they noted the community growth, that they began "to dream" of an addition. Some planning was begun, but the cost was too high.

In 1957-1958 the church was redecorated by painting the interior, installing new carpeting, and refinishing the pews. Also a new Allen Organ was purchased through contributions to an organ fund.

At the end of the decade, the Rev. Charles Doutt, now 80 years of age, retired again. He certainly served Richwood well! In 1960 (Rev. Lloyd Applegate, 1960-1961) aluminum siding was installed on the old church, and all other exposed wood was painted. Also the stained glass windows were reloaded and placed into new frames. In 1970 (Rev. John W. Bovill, 1965-1970) the church was completely renovated. Eighteen new pews were installed—given in memory or honor of loved ones. New carpet was laid—pledges made by members. New front doors were installed—given by the Nancy B. Class. The pulpit chairs were reupholstered and new altar cushions were given. The interior of the church was completely repainted—again through pledges. The total expenditure was over \$7,000.

In the fall of 1985, the Glassboro State College Pre-School was asked to leave the college facility so as to make room for other college needs. The directors contacted our church and we agreed to a three month trial. Afterward they stayed at the church for several years. Parents often said how they appreciated this school. The next spring (1986), the pastor initiated a Memorial Day Service. We listed the many from our area who were in the service. We also noted those former pastors of the faith who are now buried in our cemetery.

Finally, our Administrative Council, in one of the Fall Planning Meetings (held at the Elmer Hospital), raised the concern to provide a new parsonage. During the years 1987-1988 almost \$50,000 was set aside for this project. The lot offered by Howard Heritage has now been purchased. In 1990 carpet was installed in the room behind the pulpit and throughout the upper floor of the Sunday School building.

Soldiers of the Cross

Another important part of our history involves identifying those persons who have entered the "Service of the Cross" from this area. Note: In 1863, shortly after the Richwood Church was built (1860), the former larger Gloucester Circuit was divided and we became part of the Union (Aura) Cir-

cuit of four churches (Richwood, Aura, Monroeville-Friendship, and Franklinville). With just one traveling circuit pastor, the use of lay Local Preachers continued to be important.

William Early (1770–1821): Son of John Early of Aura. He was pastor from 1791 (age 21) till his death.

Charles C. Souder: Local Preacher, 1865 on. He came to our area that year from Berwick, Pennsylvania. He served our Circuit, chiefly at Richwood. He became a Local Deacon in 1869. In 1889 our Charge was changed to have just two churches, Aura and Richwood. Some ten years later Rev. Porch became a Local Preacher (1902), and soon Charles shifted his involvement to Glassboro. He was a key person at Richwood for about twenty-five years.

Nathan Edwards: Local Preacher, 1865. He was from Glassboro. From 1869–1874 he served our circuit. He then discontinued pastoral work.

Isaac H. Clouse: Local Preacher, 1869. He was from Gloucester City. From 1870–1877 he served our circuit. He then discontinued pastoral work.

William P. Tomlin: Local Preacher, from Franklinville. He became Exhorter in 1878 and Local Preacher in 1881. Churches he served include: Ewan, Rocky Hill, Good Luck and Bayville, Ewan, Chews Landing (1892 Local Deacon), Southard (1893 Local Elder), Auburn, Hancocks Bridge, Greenville, Cedar Bridge, Squankum, Harmony, West Farms, then retired to Lakewood (1920).

David D. Fisler (1855–1925): Son of Benjamin of Aura. In 1882, after schooling, the Quarterly Conference voted him Local Preacher. The next year he went "on trial" for full membership in the Conference. He served: Chews Landing, New Gretna, Ewan, Assisted at Union (Aura), Waretown, Tabernacle, Crosswicks, Alloway, English Creek, Union assistant, Salem-First assistant, Pitman assistant, Bridgeton-Wesley assistant, Friendship, Hancocks Bridge, Asbury, Marlton, Chatsworth, Jefferson, Barnsboro, then retired to Pitman (1919). He died at his home in Pitman in 1925 and was survived by his wife Mary E. Fisler.

Leonard S. Pancoast: Local Preacher. He had joined the church in 1878. He became exhorter in 1891, and Local Preacher 1892. He served Millville-Fourth, Green Creek, Port Elizabeth. In 1896 he discontinued pastoral work.

Harry T. Fisler (1859–1925): Brother to David above. He became Exhorter in 1896, and Local Preacher in 1897. He served: Elwood, Cross Keys, Chews Landing (in 1909 he went "on trial" for full membership in the Conference), Oakhurst, South River, Penns Grove-Saint Paul's, and Elmer, and then he took retirement in 1924. He died in 1925 at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Austin (Edith) Bozarth in Atlantic City. Survivors include

wife, Mrs. Anna (Gardner) Fisler; daughter, Mrs. Blaine (Mary) Walker; and sons Gilder and Benjamin.

J. Howard Porch (1860–1933): Local Preacher. He had joined the church in 1876. He became exhorter 1891, Local Preacher 1900, Local Deacon 1908, and finally Local Elder 1913. Howard served at Richwood until the church was by itself in 1921. (Was he grandson to the William Porch noted in the 1823 Quarterly Conference stewards?) From 1921 to 1925 Rev. Porch had no assignment. (Was this the period when he served the independent New Freedom Church?) For the period 1926–1930 he served for the Conference at Plainville and Piney Hollow, and in 1931 Porchtown and Piney Hollow. He retired in 1932 and died in November 1933. He is father to Mrs. Helen (Porch) Campbell.

Charles W. Doutt (1880–1962): Moved to Pitman while working for the Pennsylvania Railroad. When the J. L. Eastlack Men's Class was organized, he became their teacher (1925). In 1945 he became a Local Preacher and part-time pastor serving Port Elizabeth and Cumberland. He returned to Richwood as pastor (1950–1959). He then retired a second time. In 1961, his devoted wife Edna passed on, and on Thursday, January 11, 1962, Charles entered glory. Services were held from the Mathis Home in Glassboro, with interment in Richwood. Rev. Robert E. Acheson, pastor at Pitman, officiated.

Henry D. Ebner (1898–1979): Born in Ewan to Henry and Lydia Ebner. He graduated from Glassboro High (1917), then worked on the family farm till 1922, when he entered college. After graduating (1925) he began teaching at Glassboro High and at the same time became part-time pastor at Ferrell. He went full time in 1927 and served Sharptown, Leesburg, Pennsville, New Brunswick, Pennsauken, Trenton, Atlantic City, and Collingswood-Embry. In 1964 he retired. He and wife Ann (Moore) Ebner influenced many young persons who today are key laymen or pastors. In retirement he assisted at Palmyra till near his death in 1979. He is interred in Richwood cemetery, in the Moore plot.

David M. Engelbrecht (b. 1954): Grew up in Richwood; son of Joseph and Ida (Armstrong) Engelbrecht. In 1978 he became a Lay Speaker. In 1981 he became a student pastor serving Barnsboro and Mount Zion. In 1984 he was ordained Deacon and began serving the Jackson Township Parish. He was ordained Elder in 1987. In 1988 he was appointed to Bordentown and Fieldsboro. In 1991 he began serving at Belmar.

In 1988, the new class of Lay Speakers included from Richwood Church the following ladies: Ruth Chambers, Gerry Oldt, and Sylvia Reed. Also, recently Pat (Zee) Young has applied for candidacy as a Diaconal Minister, relating to her work in Nursing.

The writer especially acknowledges the assistance given in preparing this history by the following: Rev. B. Dayle Tate, Pastor; Mrs. Walter (Esther Elkins) Neale, Church Historian; Mrs. Walter (Isabel Downer) Heritage, Township Historical Society President; Mrs. Harry (Doris Waltes) Reuter, Chairlady of Administrative Council; Mr. Raymond Battle, President, J. L. Eastlack Men's Class; Mr. Cy Eastlack; and Rev. Robert B. Steelman, Southern New Jersey Conference Historian.



Bishop Levi Scott
(1802-1882)

Bishop Scott was a charter member of the New Jersey Conference.



Bishop Edmund Storer Janes
(1807-1876)

Born in Sheffield, Massachusetts, April 27, 1807. He was converted in 1820 and united with the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was received into the Philadelphia Conference, 1830. Elected bishop, 1844. He died September 18, 1876.



Morganville United Methodist Church
Morganville, New Jersey
Present building, 1981
Photo courtesy of Morganville United Methodist Church

History of Morganville United Methodist Church Morganville, New Jersey

Mr. Walter H. Jones

*Church Historian, Morganville United Methodist Church;
Northeast District Representative, S.N.J. Conference Historical Society;
Past Member and Secretary, S.N.J. Conference
Commission on Archives and History*

The Morganville Methodist Episcopal Church began as a Sunday School. In 1863 Class Meetings, led by John Lewis, were held in the schoolhouse at Strong's Mill on Sabbath afternoons. It was part of the Matawan Sunday School, but funds collected were reported under the name Morganville Sunday School. The class was transferred to Morgan's Neighborhood at the Morgan School House on January 16, 1864. Rev. Charles R. Hartranft, the minister at Matawan, did not approve of this. During a spiritual revival service in 1869 at the Matawan Methodist Episcopal Church, a small nucleus of people from Morganville gained the inspiration, incentive, and courage to build their own church to serve Morganville.

Charles Leynes, Jeremiah D. Bedle, John Lewis, John A. Heiser, and Daniel Bedle, trustees of the Bishop Janes Chapel, contracted with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Leynes to purchase a plot of land located on the southwest corner of Church Lane and Highway 79 in Morganville for the sum of \$100. On this plot, a modest frame structure was erected by donated labor of the people for a church building at a cost of \$2,100. It was named "The Bishop Janes Chapel," in honor of Bishop Edmund Storer Janes (1807-1876). The *Matawan Journal* dated Saturday, October 10, 1869, reported that the cornerstone of the new church was laid on Thursday last by Rev. Elwood Haines Stokes and that \$100 was raised on the spot. The deed was recorded on November 11, 1869.

Lay ministers were called upon to conduct services when ordained ministers were not available. The first lay preacher was John Lewis, who was also Sunday School Superintendent and trustee of the church. The first regularly appointed minister was the Rev. Socrates Townsend Horner, a Local Preacher from Atlanticville, 1873-1874. The church was always looking to meet the needs of its people and of the community, and therefore sheds were erected in 1892 to house ten teams of horses that would bring families to worship. This was done through the donation of a piece of land (20 feet x 79 feet 6 inches) at the rear of the church by a trustee and a neighbor, Mr. Charles Leynes. The labor and timber were donated by members and friends. In 1892 the original mortgage of \$650 was paid off through a solici-

tation drive conducted in the village with individual contributions ranging from one dollar to twenty-five dollars. A praise service was held on Washington's birthday. On the front of the cupola hung a large banner bearing the legend, "Free from Debt." It was the gift of Mr. Hendrick Snyder. Under it floated a beautiful flag which had been paid for by small sums solicited by Mr. Snyder and presented by the church. During 1894 they purchased property adjoining the church for a parsonage, consisting of a house and five acres of land for \$750. Both the church and parsonage were improved in 1913 with electric lights and a heater at a cost of \$350. The year of 1914 found a fine reed organ installed. In 1927 church bells were hung.

Supply pastor John Mabuce (1925) found the church without adequate heating facilities. The area under the church was dug out by the young people so that a hot air furnace could be installed, with an area for Harvest Home suppers. A new bell was put up Friday morning, December 23, 1927. A Sunday School Christmas entertainment program was held that night. The congregation was unable to hold services in the church during January and February 1928 because of renovations. The leader in this work was Rev. F. B. Whitson, who had the assistance of many members of the church as well as other interested persons in the community. In addition to the painting and repair work which was done, new art glass windows and electric light fixtures were installed, adding greatly to the attractiveness of the building. During renovations, morning worship services were held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Lambertson, and evening services at the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Smith. The re-opening of the church was on Sunday, March 4, 1928. The Rev. Dr. Herbert J. Belting, Superintendent of the New Brunswick District, presided at the morning service at 11:00 A.M. and delivered the dedicatory address of the new bell. In 1955 the church was raised and expanded further with kitchen facilities, a storeroom, and two bathrooms. On April 12, 1964, under Rev. Fred H. Bowen, ground was broken for a five-room church school building. This building was completed at a cost approaching \$30,000, which the church paid off in four and a half years. The cornerstone of the building was laid and the building dedicated on September 17, 1964. The mortgage for the Education Building was paid in full on December 9, 1968, an event that was celebrated at the 100th Anniversary on Sunday, November 23, at 3:30 P.M. Confident of future growth in membership, a congregational meeting, held in February 1969, voted in favor of purchasing from Stacy Conover five acres of land on Highway 79 near Conover Road. In April 1978 the contract for construction was awarded; the education building was sold; and ground was broken for the new church.

The Morganville Independent Fire Company allowed the church membership to use its hall until the new sanctuary was completed. Christmas Eve Service was held in the almost-finished sanctuary, and the membership

moved in on Easter Sunday, 1981. On November 29, 1981, Bishop C. Dale White presided at the dedication. In 1990 the church became a single charge under Mary Frances Pearson Jones. Throughout the years Morganville has shared its minister with Jacksonville (Cheesquake), Matawan, Clifford, Jerseyville, Navesink, Sayreville, Fair Haven, Englishtown and Union Beach. On Monday, April 26, 1993, plans for finishing the basement, previously left incomplete, were approved; on July 9, 1993, construction began under Herb Meron, Chair. November 28, 1993, marked the consecration of our fellowship hall.

We have felt the presence of God in our lives throughout these 125 years. It is our prayer that we will continue to allow the Holy Spirit to work in and through the congregation of the Morganville United Methodist Church.



Morganville Methodist Episcopal Church

Morganville, New Jersey
Original building, 1869

Photo courtesy of Morganville United Methodist Church



James Edward Oglethorpe
(1696–1785)
Founder of Georgia

John Wesley and General Oglethorpe
On Board the *Simmonds*,
During the Voyage to America, 1735–1736

Thomas Coke
(1747–1814)

and

Henry Moore¹
(1751–1844)

A circumstance occurred in the course of his voyage, which is not unworthy of notice. Mr. Wesley hearing an unusual noise in the cabin of General Oglethorpe, (the Governor of *Georgia*, with whom he sailed,) stepped in to inquire the cause of it: on which the General immediately addressed him, "Mr. Wesley, you must excuse me, I have met with a provocation too great for man to bear. You know, the only wine I drink, is Cyprus wine, as it agrees with me the best of any. I therefore provided myself with several dozens of it, and this villain *Grimaldi*" (his foreign servant,² who was present, and almost dead with fear,) "has drank up the whole of it. But I will be revenged of him. I have ordered him to be tied hand and foot, and to be carried to the man of war which sails with us.³ The rascal should have taken care how he used me so, for *I never forgive*." "Then, I hope, Sir," (said Mr. Wesley, looking calmly at him,) "You never sin." The General was quite confounded at the reproof: and putting his hand into his pocket, took out a bunch of keys, which he threw at *Grimaldi*, saying "There, villain, take my keys, and behave better for the future."⁴



¹Thomas Coke and Henry Moore, *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.: Including an Account of the Great Revival of Religion, In Europe and America, of Which He was the First and Chief Instrument.* London: Printed by G. Paramore, North-Green, Worship-Street; And sold by G. Whitfield, at the Chapel in the City-Road; and at all the Methodist Preaching-Houses in Town and Country; 1792. [First edition.] pp. 98–99. The first edition was published in April 1792; a second printing, designated "The Second Edition" on the title-page, had been produced by the time of the Conference in July 1792. The story given here also appears in Joseph B. Wakeley, *Anecdotes of the Wesleys: Illustrative of Their Character and Personal History* (New York: Carlton & Lanahan; Cincinnati: Hitchcock & Walden; 1869), pp. 92–93.

²The foreign servant was Alexander Grimaldi.

³The man-of-war was H.M. sloop *Hawk*, Captain James Gascoigne. Commanding the *Simmonds* was Captain Joseph Cornish.

⁴John Wesley's Diary for Wednesday, January 14, 1736, contains this note: "! Oglethorpe forgave Al. Grim. [Alexander Grimaldi]."

A Runaway Problem at the Kingswood School

[The Kingswood School was founded in 1741 for the education of Methodist children in general; it later became a school for the sons of the Methodist preachers. Students generally entered at eight years of age and stayed until fourteen years of age. The rigorous curriculum and the strict rules sometimes led to rebellion or escape. One student who sought escape more than once was William Byron, son of J. M. Byron. The *Register of Kingswood School* (Second and Revised Edition, 1910) indicates that William Byron was a student at Kingswood from 1808 to 1814, the normal full stay at the school. In spite of the events of 1812 described below—or perhaps because of the last of them—William Byron finished his course at Kingswood.]

Running away—and there was much of it in these days—was not always to be ascribed to bravado or to depravity. It was sometimes pitifully due to sheer wretchedness. There is a striking series of entries in an old day-book of 1812. The first two record expenses on 1st July and 2nd November in bringing back runaways. In each of these little companies, of two and three respectively, occurs the name of Byron. In the light of this fact, the entry for 14th November calls up a picture that suggests various thoughts. It reads: "A chain for Byron's leg, 1s. 3d."¹

[Another glimpse of life at Kingswood follows.]

The dormitories were low and over-crowded; "number 4" was only seven feet high. Lamps and candles died out for sheer want of air. Till 1843 boys made their own beds. These latter were mainly of the semi-detached kind known as double cribs; a board ran down the middle as a partition. Pillow-fights, of course, took place. Nor were these the only delights. "We kept the feast of tabernacles, not at canonical periods. Our sheets and blankets, stretched from point to point, formed the tents we dwelt in, until a footstep on the staircase would force us to strike them with a speed no Israelite ever dreamt of. We observed the eclipses of the moon, until the governor, in the plenitude of his power, cashiered the planet, and would 'have no more eclipses.' . . . Many tales were told in the bedrooms. Novels were worse

contraband than tobacco, but in the first bedroom *Oliver Twist* had begun to be told, chapter by chapter. . . . They were not always novels and tales of adventure that were told in the bedrooms, save so far as that was a grand adventure when 'He took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men'; for I have known the 'old, old story' told in those rooms with a youthful fervour and a simple pathos, as when Andrew first found his own brother Simon."²



Old Kingswood School, Main Building

¹Arthur Henry Law Hastling, Walter Addington Willis, and Walter Percy Workman, *The History of Kingswood School: Together with Registers of Kingswood School and Woodhouse Grove School, and a List of Masters* (By Three Old Boys. London: Charles H. Kelly, 1898), pp. 167–168. (Also bound in: Arthur Henry Law Hastling and Walter Percy Workman, *Register of Kingswood School: With which is Incorporated the Register of the Old Woodhouse Grove School, together with a List of Masters and other lists.* [Second and Revised Edition. (London:) Published for the Old Boys' Union, 1910].)

²Hastling, Willis, and Workman, *The History of Kingswood School*, pp. 152–153.

**Constitution of The Historical Society
of the
Southern New Jersey Conference
of
The United Methodist Church**

Article I. Name

This Society shall be known as The Historical Society of the Southern New Jersey Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Article II. Purposes

The purpose of this Society shall be to promote interest in the study and preservation of the History of the Conference and its antecedents, and to assist and support the Annual Conference Commission on Archives and History in carrying out its Disciplinary duties, as requested.

Article III. Membership

All persons interested in the purposes of this Society may become members by the payment of annual dues or a contribution to a Life Membership in an amount or amounts as the Society may direct.

Article IV. Officers

The officers of the Society shall be a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, as elected at the annual meeting.

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the officers of the Society (President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer), one member from each district, Conference Historian, Editor of *The Historical Trail*, publicity and *Relay* representative, and up to five members at large.

Article V. Meetings

The annual meeting shall be held at a time to be designated by the Executive Committee. Notice of the annual meeting shall be sent to each member of the Society at least fifteen days in advance of the annual meeting. The Executive Committee shall meet at the call of the President.

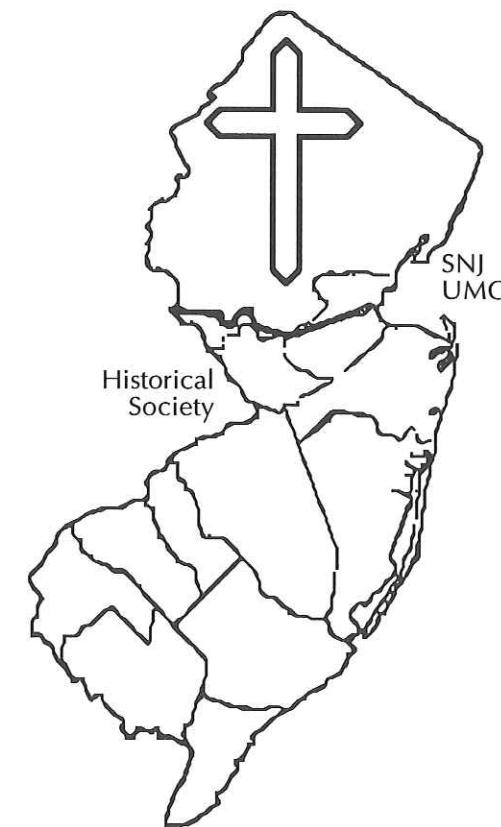
Article VI. By-Laws

The Society is empowered to adopt such By-Laws as may be necessary.

Article VII. Amendments

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting at any meeting.

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Southern New Jersey Conference**



The United Methodist Church

History

The present Conference Historical Society dates from 1927 and the organizing efforts of the Rev. Alfonso Dare, who served as president for 18 years. An earlier Society had been in existence from 1882 to 1913, but little is known of its work. The current Society was incorporated in 1937 and has done much to collect historical books and records relating to United Methodism and its churches within the bounds of the Southern New Jersey Conference. It served as the official historical agency of the Conference until the Commission on Archives and History was organized in 1969.

Purpose

The statement of purpose in the Society's constitution is "the study and preservation of the history of the Conference and its antecedents, and to assist and support the Annual Conference Commission on Archives and History in carrying out the Disciplinary duties, as requested."

Membership

All persons interested in the purposes of the Society may become members by the payment of annual dues or a contribution to a Life Membership in such amounts as the Society may direct. Current dues are \$5 per person per year, or \$8 per couple. The Benjamin Abbott Life Membership is available for individuals or churches for a one-time contribution of \$75. Officers of the Society are elected at an annual meeting to which all members are invited.

Membership Benefits

All members receive a copy of *The Historical Trail*, the yearbook of the Society, which has been published since 1962.

Invitations are extended to every member to participate in the annual meetings and Society-sponsored tours, plus other occasional special events.

Membership in the Society contributes to the ongoing preservation of the history of Southern New Jersey Methodism and to the dissemination of the knowledge of the same.

Members have the opportunity personally to volunteer some of their time to assist in the historical work of the Conference.

Conference Archives

The beginning task of assembling the records now housed in the Conference Historical Library and Archives Room now located on the campus of The Pennington School was begun by Rev. Alfonso Dare and the Historical Society at its inception in 1927. While these materials are now under the direct supervision of the Commission on Archives and History, Historical Society members may use the resources of the archives to do research, may volunteer to help in the room, and can be on the lookout for material to be placed in the archives for safe keeping.

Old Estellville Church

Since 1967 the Historical Society has been involved in maintaining the historic Old Estellville Methodist Church near Mays Landing in Atlantic County. Built in 1834, and now owned by the Conference, it is maintained by the Society through its Friends of Old Estellville Methodist Church Committee. It is opened for yearly anniversary services the afternoon and evening of the first Sunday in October and for other occasional services.

Membership Application

Southern New Jersey Conference Historical Society

Name _____

Street Address or PO Box

City _____ State _____ ZIP Code _____

Minister Laity

Yearly Dues—Individual (\$5.00) Yearly Dues—Couple (\$8.00)

Benjamin Abbott Life Membership (\$75.00)

Send to

Mrs. Edna M. Molyneaux, Treasurer
No. 71
768 East Garden Road
Vineland, New Jersey 08360

Presidents of the Conference Historical Society

Rev. Alfonso Dare	1927–1947
Rev. Dr. Frank B. Stanger	1947–1960
Rev. David C. Evans	1960–1967
Rev. Robert B. Steelman	1967–1976
Rev. Dr. J. Hillman Coffee	1976–1984
Mrs. Penny Moore	1984–1991
Mrs. Miriam L. G. Coffee	1991–

Conference Historical Society

Executive Committee

<i>President</i>	Mrs. Miriam L. G. Coffee
<i>Vice-President</i>	Rev. Charles A. Green
<i>Secretary</i>	Mrs. Doreen M. Dyer
<i>Treasurer</i>	Mrs. Edna M. Molyneaux
<i>Chairman, Commission on Archives and History</i>	Rev. Christopher T. Dixon
<i>Editor, The Historical Trail</i>	Rev. Charles A. Green
<i>Conference Historian; and Archivist, Northeastern Jurisdictional Commission on Archives and History</i>	Rev. Robert B. Steelman
<i>Central District Representative</i>	Mrs. Thelma A. Grovatt
<i>Northeast District Representative</i>	Mr. Walter H. Jones
<i>Northwest District Representative</i>	<i>To be selected</i>
<i>Southeast District Representative</i>	Mrs. Penny Moore
<i>Southwest District Representative</i>	Rev. Howard L. Cassaday
<i>Members at Large</i>	Rev. Dr. J. Hillman Coffee
	Mr. Somers Corson
	Mrs. Marguerite Sprengle
<i>Publicity and Relay Representative</i>	Mrs. Dorothy A. S. Lang

Commission on Archives and History

<i>Chairman</i>	Rev. Christopher T. Dixon
<i>Vice-Chairman</i>	Mrs. Eileen Steelman
<i>Secretary</i>	Mr. Timothy M. Griscom
<i>Financial Secretary</i>	Ms. Miriam Parsell
<i>President, Conference Historical Society</i>	Mrs. Miriam L. G. Coffee
<i>Conference Historian; and Archivist, Northeastern Jurisdictional Commission on Archives and History</i>	Rev. Robert B. Steelman
<i>Member, Northeastern Jurisdictional Commission on Archives and History</i>	Rev. Charles A. Green
<i>Members at Large</i>	Mrs. Beatrice Bentley Rev. Alex Borsos, Jr. Rev. Dr. J. Hillman Coffee Mrs. Margaret Cousins Mrs. Evelyn Flammer Rev. James D. Peterson Mr. W. Arthur Poyner Gladys Whittington